Life, Land and Power

Contesting development in northern Botswana

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Abstract

Based on 15 months of fieldwork in three Basarwa villages on the northern periphery of the Okavango Delta, Botswana, this thesis is a study of the indeterminate yet universally powerful notion of 'development'. It explores the dynamics, meanings and implications of different local and national conceptions of what 'development' in this area should entail, and focuses on efforts by Basarwa to fashion a better 'life' for themselves, as well as on the policies and programmes of various agencies of the Botswana government.

Basarwa have attracted much anthropological interest, which has often been based on assumptions as to their status as 'hunter-gatherers'. This author instead views their ethnicity as a key set of symbols and practices, which have structured the nature of their participation in official development programmes. He contextualises contemporary development interventions within the framework of a much longer historical process of alienation from political and economic processes in the region. Of particular importance has been their loss of control over land and wildlife, central markers of their ethnicity.

The principle context in which these themes are explored is the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programme, an initiative increasingly common to African governments, that claims to decentralise management of natural resources to rural residents. Despite these aims, the author shows that in practice CBNRM on the Okavango fringe has so far served in certain ways to achieve exactly the opposite. Nonetheless, many Basarwa have taken the introduction of CBNRM as an opportunity to reverse the trend of alienation by asserting their rights to land and the resources on it, as well as the power to manage them according to their own priorities. In bringing the themes of ethnicity and development together, the author concludes by suggesting means by which CBNRM could better accommodate local-level diversity, and be used to meet the overlapping goals of the government, tourism, conservation, and Basarwa themselves.

Acknowledgments

A project of this nature, that has been four years in the making (and yet more in conception), has obviously been enriched by many more people than can be listed here. My greatest debt is to the many people in Khwai, Gudigwa and Mababe, who so graciously hosted my fieldwork. I am particularly grateful to Merafe, Oral, Joseph and Mma Moatlhodi, Kebuelemang and Mma Boithato, Six and Mma Kanjiye, Donald and Sonja, Brown, KB, Amos, Idea, Mma Lebonang, and Mma Kereleng. To them, and many others in the northern sandveld, I owe for not only a great deal learnt, but also a thoroughly enjoyable fifteen months of fieldwork.

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Contents

Abstract i
Acknowledgments iii
Contents v
Lists of Figures, Maps, Tables and Plates ix
A note on orthography xiii
Acronyms xv
Map of Botswana xvii
Map of research area xix

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION 1
Introduction to Ngamiland 3
Life, land and power in the northern sandveld of Ngamiland 11
Anthropology, representation and the Kalahari 15
Re-conceptualising Basarwa in terms of their past 18
Linking development and identity 20
Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) 21
Relationships and writing 23
Romanticism 27
Structure of the thesis 29

PART I: LAND AND POWER

CHAPTER TWO
AUTHORITY AND INEQUALITY 33
History, ideology and memory 34
Ethnicity and inequality 36
Prehistory 37
Different historical encounters 40
Relative equality (1700-1840) 41
The rise of inequality (1840-1906) 44
Kgamelo 48
Enforced servitude 52
British rule (1906-1966) 54
The legacy of servitude: memory and experience 56
Contesting servitude 58
Authority and incorporation 61
Conclusion 64

CHAPTER THREE
LAND AND LANDSCAPE **67**
Gudigwa **68**
'Mapping the land' 68
Historical land tenure 76
Immigration and the decline of tenure 84
Contemporary attitudes to historical territories 87
Khwai **89**
The creation of Moremi Game Reserve 91
Mababe **96**
The creation of Chobe National Park 103
Constituting space in the northern sandveld **107**
Conclusion: the centrality of land **113**

PART II: LIFE **85**

CHAPTER FOUR
WILDERNESS, PEOPLE AND DEVELOPMENT **117**
Understanding power **118**
Imagining wilderness **120**
Selling and consuming nature in the Okavango Delta 124
People in nature 125
Imagining Basarwa **132**
The state, (non)ethnicity and development **136**
RADP: dissolving difference 138
Dependency or self-assertion? 144
Conclusion **146**

CHAPTER FIVE
LIVELIHOODS **149**
Components of livelihood strategies **152**
Cutting grass in Khwai **153**
Money **158**
Livestock **165**
Wildlife **180**
Informal procurement of meat 185
Illegal hunting 191
Falling foul of the law 194
Impacts of hunting legislation 196
Conclusion **200**

CHAPTER SIX
IDENTITY AND LEGITIMACY **203**
Culture, identity and context **205**
Essentialising identity: how Basarwa speak about themselves **207**
People of the bush, people of poverty 208
Narratives of identity and the constitution of rights **211**
Articulating with molao 213
Renegotiating belonging 216
The complex faces of hegemony **219**
Conclusion **229**

PART III: DEVELOPMENT 231

CHAPTER SEVEN
CBNRM: CONTESTING DEVELOPMENT 233
CBNRM: development and power 234
CBNRM and the capitalisation of nature 239
Participation or paternalism? 243
Regularity and chaoticisation 246
Local priorities in CBNRM 247
Contesting access to land 248
Political action to address political problems 252
The crucial issue of control 254
What are the implications of CBNRM? 258
Reconfiguring aspirations and minimising options 259
Political empowerment 260
Conclusion 263

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSIONS 267
Researching and representing Basarwa 269
Development: discourse and diversity 270
Reassessing Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) 273
Resource tenure rights 274
Conservation and development: decentralising power 276
The future 282

REFERENCES 285
GLOSSARY 303

APPENDICES 305

Appendix One: names of origin 309
Appendix Two: Bugakhwe land taxonomy 313
Appendix Three: Government handouts 317
Appendix Four: Yields of game meat 319
Appendix Five: Gudigwa's family lands 323

Lists of Figures, Maps, Tables and Plates

List of Figures:

Figure 2.1:	Linguistic relationships of Khwe languages.	39
Figure 3.1:	Kwere's village at /Uku burning.	96
Figure 3.2:	Lineage of Kebuelemang, Mababe's headman.	98
Figure 3.3:	'No Hunting' sign produced in 1961 for the new Chobe Game Reserve.	105
Figure 5.1a,b,c:	Past and present stock ownership in Mababe.	175
Figure 7.1a,b:	Posters used to encourage villages to participate in CBNRM.	241
Figure 7.1a,b:	Posters used to encourage villages to participate in CBNRM.	242

List of Maps:

Map 1.1:	Botswana, showing main research area.	xv
Map 1.2:	The Okavango Delta and northern sandveld.	xvi
Map 2.1:	Early settlement and immigration into Ngamiland.	41
Map 3.1	Gudigwa with other Okavango Community Trust villages and surrounding Controlled Hunting Areas.	69
Map 3.2:	Khwai, Moremi Game Reserve (with extensions) and surrounding areas.	93
Map 3.3:	Mababe and the various phases of Chobe National Park.	104
Map 4.1:	Khwai and neighbouring lodges.	123
Map 5.1:	Protected areas in Botswana.	172
Map 7.1:	Boundaries of CHAs in Botswana, showing those that have been designated for allocation to local villages.	235

List of Tables:

Table 2.1:	Ethnic composition of Ngamiland, according to the 1946 census.	50
Table 2.2:	Representation of ethnic hierarchies in Ngamiland through *kgamelo*.	51
Table 3.1:	Family land size for seven of the ten main families that now live in Gudigwa.	78
Table 5.1:	Comparative stock ownership for villages on the northern arm of the Okavango Delta, 1998.	179
Table 5.2:	'Problem animals' killed in Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa 1996-1998.	191
Table 5.3:	Yields of bundles of dried meat (*digwapa*) and potential returns.	193
Table A1:	Potential annual yields of meat under the SGL system, Khwai	313
Table A2:	Potential annual yields of meat under the Community Quota System, Khwai	314

List of Plates:

Plate 1.1:	Okavango Delta from the air.	5
Plate 1.2:	Mokgwati (from near Gudigwa) at his home in Maun.	5
Plate 1.3:	Kebuelemang Kgosietsile, headman of Mababe.	9
Plate 1.4:	Ts'ima Thamaga, headman of Gudigwa.	9
Plate 2.1:	Tshaatoboga, on the southeastern side of the Mababe Depression.	45
Plate 2.2:	Woodland of the northern Delta fringe.	45
Plate 3.1:	Entering Gudigwa.	71
Plate 3.2:	Old village site in the northern sandveld.	71
Plate 3.3:	Elephant path through the bush (*oo dao).*	73
Plate 3.4:	Amos drawing maps in the sand.	73
Plate 3.5:	Cattle at Dishokora being watered.	79
Plate 3.6:	Buffalo fence near Gudigwa.	79
Plate 3.7:	Aerial view of Khwai village.	91
Plate 3.8:	*Mapako a ga Moremi*, the old site of chief Moremi's kraal.	91
Plate 3.9:	Mababe village.	99
Plate 3.10:	Mma Kgosi, the headman of Mababe's wife, with a grandchild.	101
Plate 3.11:	*Se tshube naga* ('don't burn the veld') sign in Mababe village.	109
Plate 3.12:	Sign between Khwai and Mababe, on boundary of Chobe National Park	109
Plate 4.1:	Elephants on the River Khwai.	121
Plate 4.2:	Tourism.	121
Plate 4.3:	Entrance to Khwai River Lodge.	127
Plate 4.4:	Bridge over Khwai River at North Gate.	127
Plate 4.5:	Classroom in Mababe Primary School.	141
Plate 4.6:	Water tank at Gudigwa.	141
Plate 5.1:	Building a shelter at grasscutting camp, Njakamakata.	155
Plate 5.2:	Carrying cut grass back to camp.	155
Plate 5.3:	Mogodu (from Mababe) at work for a taxidermist in Maun.	161
Plate 5.4:	Kenny (from Khwai) at work in a lodge.	161
Plate 5.5:	Drought relief work, Mababe.	165
Plate 5.6:	Idea, from Mababe in his *semausu* (vending shop).	165
Plate 5.7:	Monthly dispersal of destitute rations, Mababe.	167
Plate 5.8:	Baskets for sale to tourists on the roadside, Khwai.	167
Plate 5.9:	Mma Batlhelehi from Khwai weaving a basket.	169
Plate 5.10:	Tending a small field, Khwai.	177
Plate 5.11:	Watering cattle, Gudigwa.	177
Plate 5.12:	Remains of a donkey in Khwai, awaiting compensation from DWNP.	181
Plate 5.13:	Finding a leopard-kill.	187
Plate 5.14:	Sangando with gun.	187
Plate 5.15:	Cutting up an elephant, Mababe.	189
Plate 5.16:	Making the elephant strips into strips of meat to dry (*digwapa*).	189
Plate 5.17:	Hunting on behalf of Khwai village from their communal quota.	197
Plate 5.18:	Sharing out meat from communal quota, Khwai.	197
Plate 6.1:	Kokoro, Nyamanyama's widow in Gudigwa.	223
Plate 6.2:	Mma Kanjiye and her daughters.	223
Plate 6.3:	Baeti (from Khwai) with his family at his house in Maun.	227
Plate 6.4:	Kebuseditswe (from Khwai) at his house in Maun.	227

Plate 7.1:	Women from Khwai in a meeting with government officials.	249
Plate 7.2:	Meeting in Khwai with CBNRM's Technical Committee.	249
Plate 8.1:	Delegates from the northern sandveld visiting a restcamp in western Bushmanland, Namibia.	279
Plate 8.2:	Visiting a tourism project by Basarwa at Dqae Qare farm, D'kar	279

A note on orthography

The Bugakhwedam and Ts'exadam orthography I use in this thesis has four basic clicks that are represented as:

/	Dental fricative (same as the Nguni 'c')
≠	Alveolar stop (no Nguni symbol)
//	Lateral fricative (same as Nguni 'x')
!	Palatal stop (same as Nguni 'q')

Each of these clicks may be combined with consonants to vary their sound, so that:

h	aspirates the click
g	voices the click
n	nasalises the click
x	releases the click on a velar fricative
q	pharangylisation of the vowel following the click

Other sounds include:

x	a velar fricative, as in the Scottish 'loch'
q	uvular stop

Bugakhwedam and Tsexadam are tonal languages, but, as this is not a linguistically technical document, I have ommitted the use of accents.

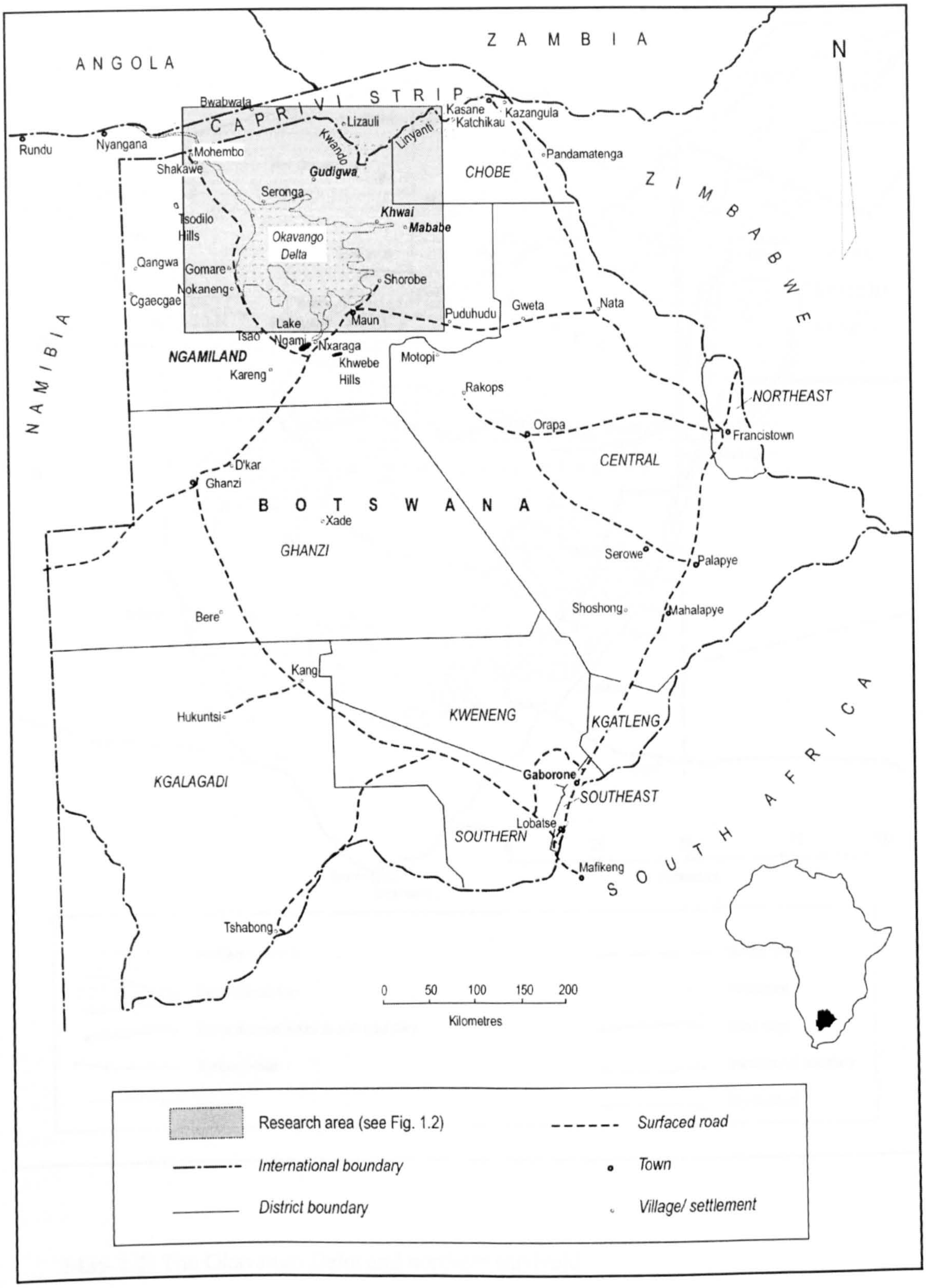
A number of different languages find their way into this thesis. To assist the reader, Khoisan languages (which include Bugakhwedam, Ts'exadam, and Ju/'hoan) are written in ***bold italics***, and Bantu languages (which include Setswana and Shiyei) are written in *italics*. Latin names are underlined.

The most commonly-used language of northern Botswana is Setswana, in which the prefix that is attached to the root determines the form of the word. The following forms thus exist of the root *-tswana*, for example:

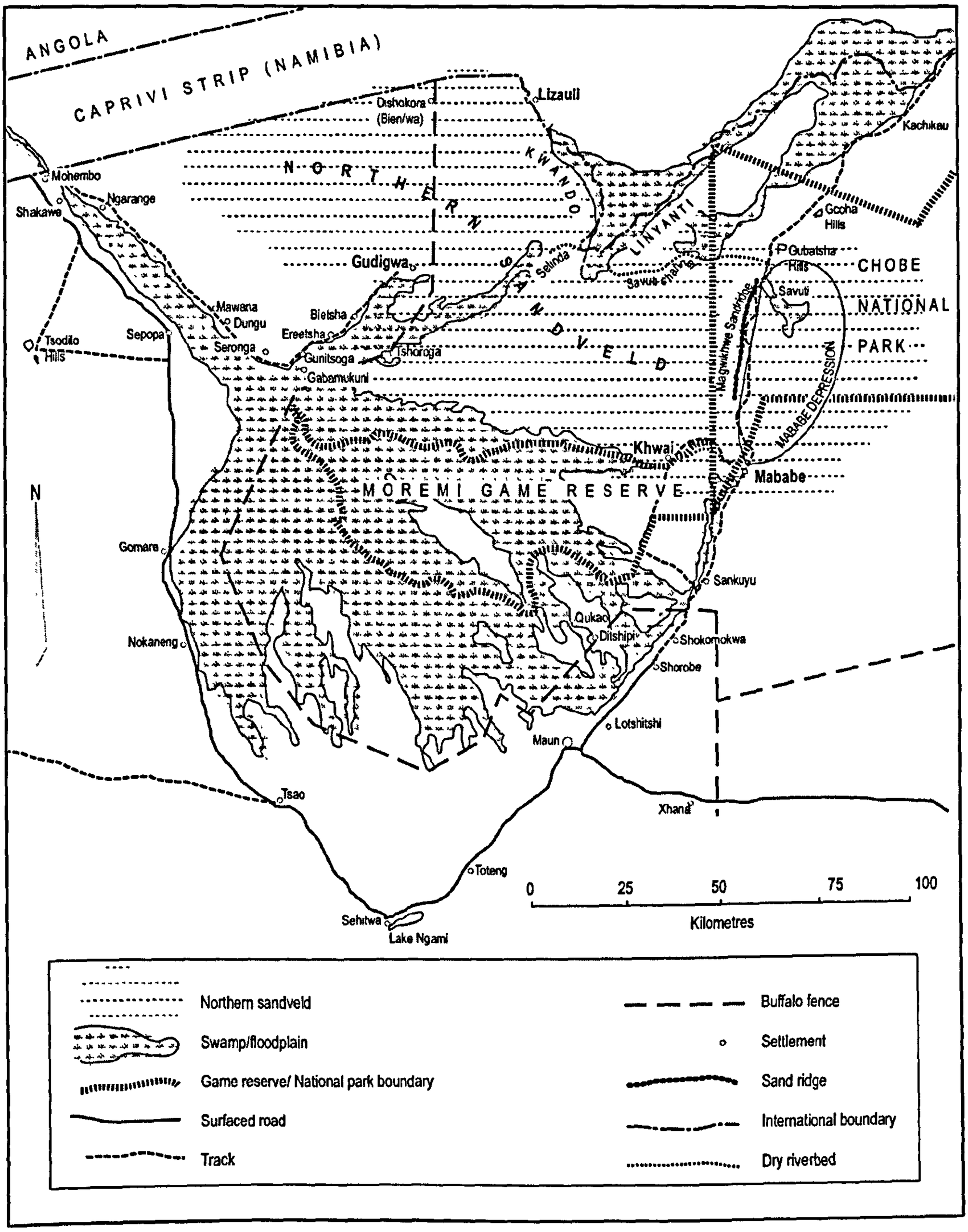
Motswana:	a person from Botswana (sing.)
Batswana:	people from Botswana (pl.)
Setswana:	language or culture of Batswana people
Botswana:	abstract qualities (usually territory) associated with Batswana people

Acronyms

ADMADE	Administrative Management Design (Zambian CBNRM programme)
BDF	Botswana Defence Force
BNA	Botswana National Archives
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme For Indigenous Resources
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBPP	Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia
CHA	Controlled Hunting Area
CI	Conservation International
CKGR	Central Kalahari Game Reserve
CMI	Chr. Michelsen Institute (Norway)
DAHP	Department of Animal Health and Production
DWNP	Department of Wildlife and National Parks
FCS	Fauna Conservation Society
GOB	Government of Botswana
HC	High Commissioner
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Development Agency
NRMP	Natural Resource Management Project
NWDC	North West District Council
OCC	Okavango Community Consultants
OCT	Okavango Community Trust
OPWT	Okavango People's Wildlife Trust
SGL	Special Game License
RAD	Remote Area Dweller
RADO	Remote Area Development Officer
RADP	Remote Area Development Programme
RC	Resident Commissioner
TGLP	Tribal Grazing Lands Policy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WMA	Wildlife Management Area



Map 1.1: Botswana, showing main research area.



Map 1.2: The Okavango Delta and northern sandveld.

Chapter One

Introduction

My fieldwork for this thesis began in Khwai, a small village in northern Ngamiland District in Botswana, in May 1996. The people of Khwai are Basarwa, also known as 'Bushmen' or 'San', most famous for their heritage of hunting and gathering. My visit to Khwai coincided with a momentous event in the history of Ngamiland. In an unprecedented move, the Department for Animal Health and Production, with the assistance of the Botswana Defence Force, had just begun slaughtering every single one of the 305 000 cattle in Ngamiland. This was the head-on assault on Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP), or cattle lung disease, that the government had judged necessary to contain the threat CBPP posed to the national beef industry: mainstay to the rural economy, as well as to the personal fortunes of many senior government officials. Most of Ngamiland was in a state of near shock as people who had spent lifetimes building up their herds of cattle lost them in the space of a few hours. *Dithlobolo di a lela* ('the guns are crying out') was a constant refrain in Maun, as cattle-owners faced the slaughter with disbelief. A few months previously I had been present at a small settlement near the Tsodilo Hills in western Ngamiland when the Minister of Agriculture arrived in his helicopter to convey the message that their cattle would have to be killed. One elderly man I knew who had little else in material possessions other than the 400 cattle he had built up over the last five decades stood up and told the Minister that he might as well shoot his children; these cattle were his life's work. They spared his children, but shot his cattle.

Yet on that weekend in Khwai, the mood could not have been more different. They were holding a village-wide workshop to discuss the content of the constitution for their proposed Community Trust. This would be a legal entity representing their village, which would be the first step in allowing their entry into the new Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programme. CBNRM was a government initiative claiming to decentralise conservation management by combining conservation and development programmes for people who lived in rural areas, such as Khwai. Thirty-two years previously, the first residents of Khwai had been removed from their village which fell within the boundaries of the new Moremi Game Reserve and dumped in their present position, on the northern border of the Reserve. By the end of the 1980s, their position again became tenuous, as representatives of some government departments told them that their village fell within a 'wildlife area' and would again have to be moved. However, by the time of their workshop in May 1996, they seemed to finally have some security of tenure. In 1995 they had sent a delegation to Gaborone to meet with the Minister of Local Government and Lands, who promised them that they would be allocated the land on which their village was situated once they registered a Community Trust.

The optimism was palpable as, with the help of an advisor from Gaborone, they discussed the issues one by one that they wanted to include in the constitution of their Community Trust. During a break in the proceedings, the conversation turned to the cattle slaughter that was happening elsewhere in Ngamiland (the area around Khwai had been zoned a Wildlife Management Area, and so was stock-free), and their attitude to it was markedly different from that of most people in their district. Sitting nearby was a driver who had brought the Remote Area Development Officer to the workshop. He was not a Mosarwa, but a Moyei, the numerically dominant ethnic category in Ngamiland, who are commonly regarded as pastoralists and agriculturalists. 'God has seen our plight, and helped us', they joked with him, 'We are now in a better position than you because you have lost your animals, but we still have ours'. Apart from being a friendly jibe, this was both a statement of similarity (we all herd animals) and one of difference (you herd cattle, but we 'herd' wildlife). In the face of government policies that had progressively restricted their access to wildlife and at the same time boosted the cattle industry, it appeared that the tables were turning. Perhaps ethnic categories were in their thoughts as one of the points they had decided to stress in the constitution was that the Khwai Community Trust would be specifically for the benefit of Basarwa.

Little did the workshop participants realise in those days of optimism that their clauses on ethnicity would block the registration of their constitution, one factor among several that would keep them from embarking on CBNRM for the next four years. This thesis is in part about that struggle. It is about the hopes and aspirations of Basarwa in northern Ngamiland, and strategies they used in attempting to shape their livelihoods. It is about the interaction between Basarwa and various arms of the state in negotiating the form and content of 'development', particularly in the context of CBNRM, and it is about the role of ethnicity in structuring relationships between Basarwa, their neighbours and the state.

Introduction to Ngamiland

The district of Ngamiland, which encompasses the northwestern section of Botswana, is dominated by a unique geographical feature. In an arid country where the sandy riverbeds that carve their courses through the barely undulating terrain usually only see water for a couple of weeks per year, Ngamiland has as its heart a huge complex of perennial waterways and seasonal floodplains, known as the Okavango Delta. Fed by abundant rainfall in the highlands of Angola, the Okavango River flows into the northwestern corner of Botswana. As it hits the flatness of the northern Kalahari, it fans out to form a vast inland delta. The upper portion of this 16,000 square kilometre delta - which in all covers a third of the district - is a network of perennial channels, swamp and reedbeds (Plate 1.1). Its extremities are patterned by a patchwork of channels, open grass plains, and tree islands, maintained by the annual flood that arrives six months after the summer rains in Angola to refresh a landscape that is by then in the middle of its dry winter.

The Okavango Delta dominates Ngamiland not only topographically, but economically as well. Being a consistent water source, it has for millennia provided for the needs of people and wildlife alike during the long dry season, when it typically does not rain for eight months (or longer during the periodic droughts). Most of the large mammals disperse into the surrounding sandveld during the rainy season to take advantage of the abundant grazing, but are forced back to Delta once the rain-filled waterholes in the sandveld dry up. The original inhabitants of Ngamiland - ancestors of those known today as Basarwa - lived largely in the sandveld, but followed the animals, on whom they depended, to the waters of the Delta each dry season. Some Basarwa made the waterways of the Delta their permanent home, as did many Bayei, the first Bantu-speakers in known history to have migrated into the region, who did so from about 1750 (Tlou 1985:12-14). Over the next century, the politically ascendant Batawana arrived in Ngamiland, as well as other less politically organised groups of Bantu-

speakers. Infestation of tsetse fly[1] through much of the Delta, however, kept most of these immigrants and their stock to its peripheries.

Much more recently, the Okavango Delta has become the base for a thriving tourist industry. The first professional hunters moved there from East Africa in 1962, but it was not until the 1990s that the industry (both photographic and hunting) boomed, becoming the largest employer in Ngamiland. Through the 1990s, tourism in Botswana grew in economic terms at an average of 11.5 percent per year (GOB 1997a:38), anchored in the Okavango Delta and neighbouring Chobe (Map 1.2). Increasingly important to sustain this growing industry has been the maintenance of national parks and game reserves, which form the core area for photographic safaris, although many photographic safaris – and all hunting safaris – take place outside the unfenced parks and reserves. Chobe National Park was created in 1960, and Moremi Game Reserve (which now encompasses one third of the Delta) in 1963, both of which were subsequently extended over the next two decades.

The bulk of my field research for this thesis was undertaken between June 1997 and August 1998, although my work as a research officer with the National Museum of Botswana had taken me to Khwai and other villages of northern Ngamiland several times in the preceding years. For the 1997-8 period of fieldwork, Katrin (my wife) and I made Maun, the district capital, our base. Maun gave an impression not too dissimilar from the familiar celluloid images of a Wild West boomtown, its dusty streets filled with modern-day cowboys whose trusty steeds were instead shiny four-wheel drive trucks. Ngamiland's tourist boom centred on Maun, and a host of entrepreneurs were arriving to take advantage of its opportunities. People from all over Ngamiland were also applying for plots on which to build a home that would provide a base from which to look for employment, as well as to gain access to schooling and the local hospital. Likewise, Maun became our base of convenience for the next fifteen months, although I spent most of my time in the northern sandveld of Ngamiland. This is the name by which I refer to the large arc of riverless land covered by the sand mantle of the Kalahari, in northern Ngamiland. It is bounded to the south by the Okavango Delta, to the north by the Caprivi Strip and the Linyanti and Kwando river systems, and to the east by Chobe National Park (Map 1.2).

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[1] Tsetse fly (Glossina morsitans) transmits a trypanosome causing sleeping sickness in people, and the fatal disease *nagana* in livestock. It does not affect wildlife.

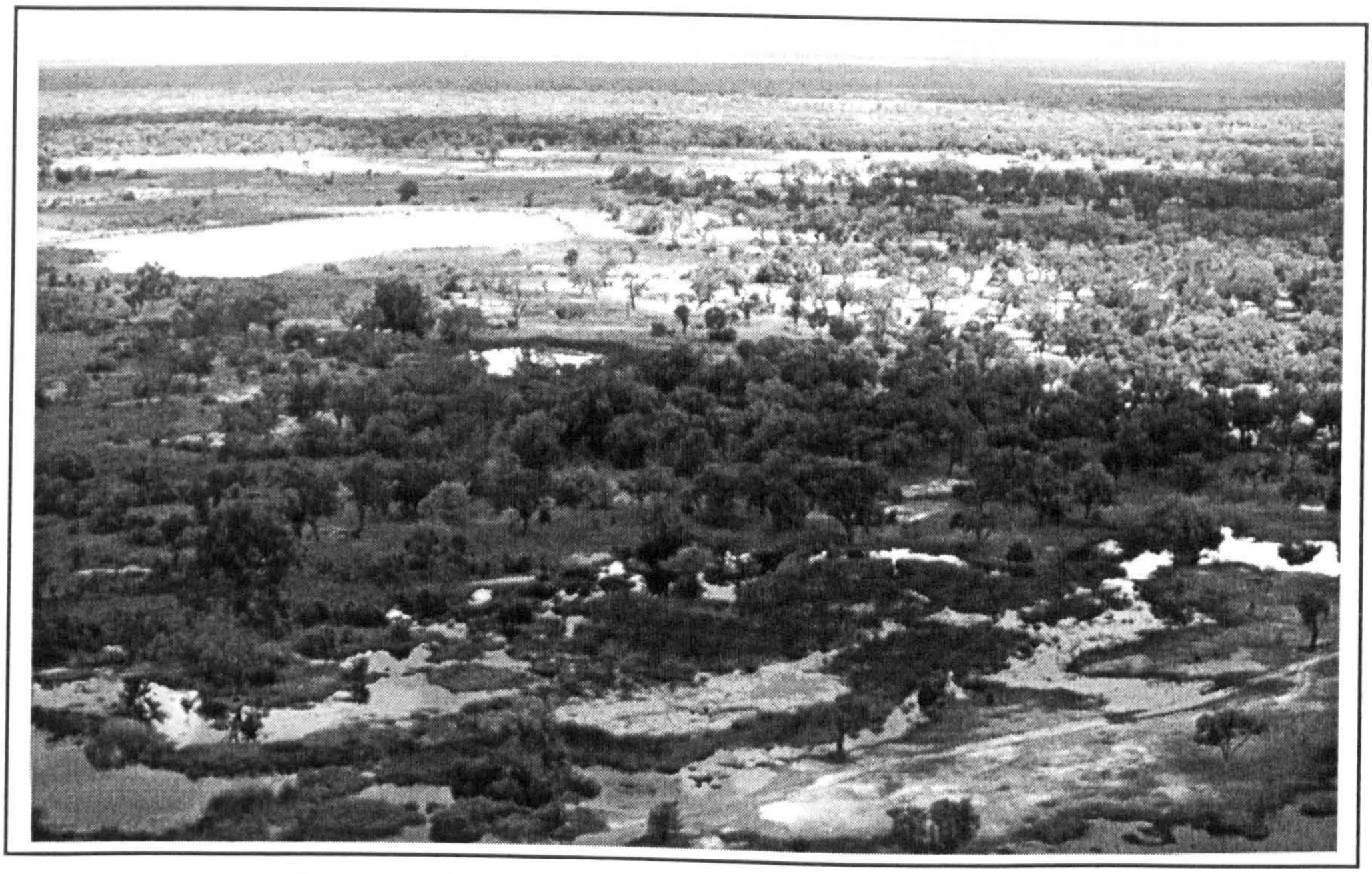

Plate 1.1: Okavango Delta from the air.

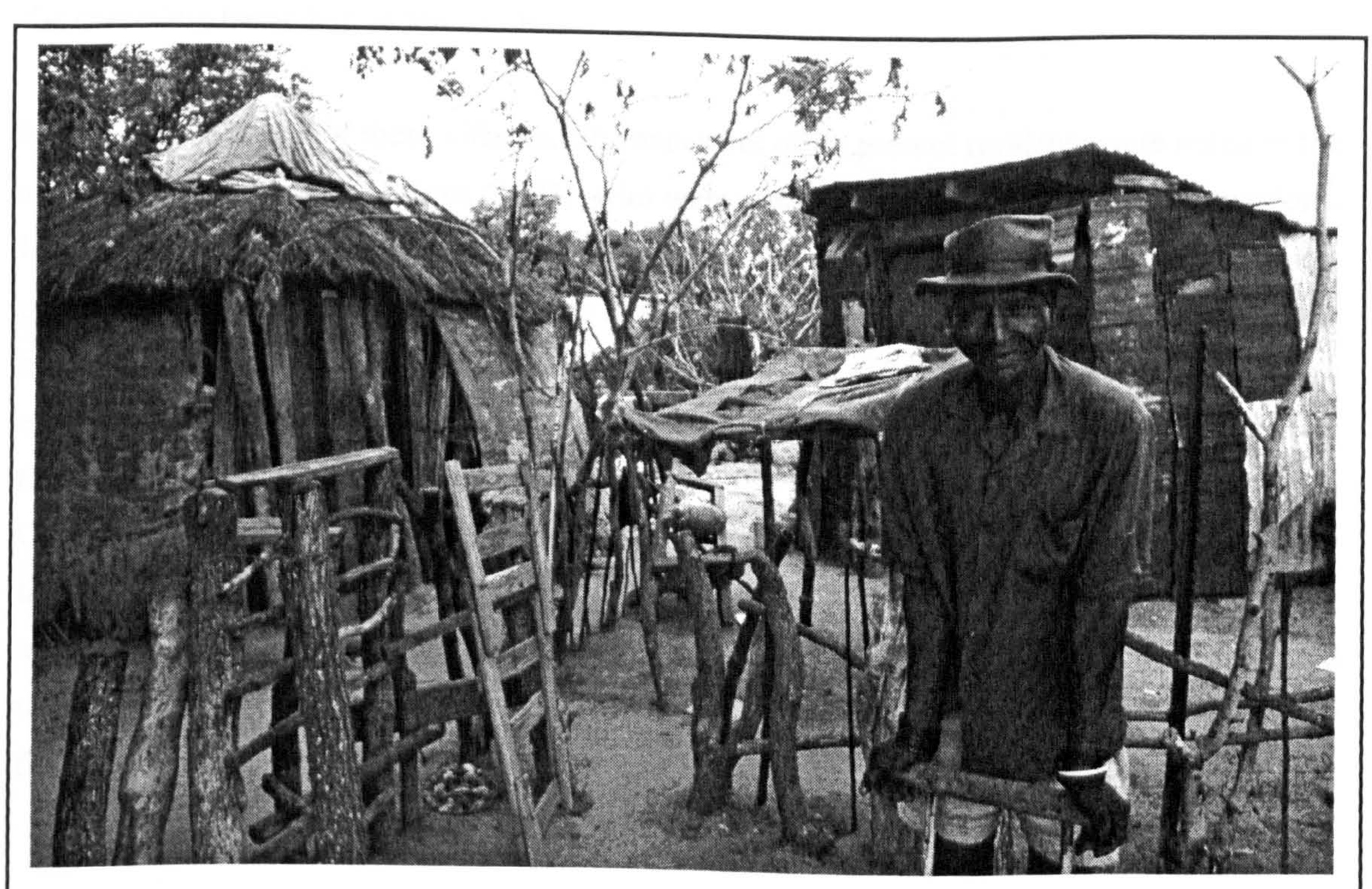

Plate 1.2: Mokgwati (from near Gudigwa) at his home in Maun.

The northern sandveld covers about 15,000 square kilometres, but appears as a blank space on most maps of Botswana. It contains three permanent villages, although even these are usually omitted from maps of the region. It was in these three villages - Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa - that, alongside Maun, I carried most of my research. Gudigwa is almost a full day's drive from Maun, stuck on the end of a line of villages that dot the northern edge of the Delta. Khwai and Mababe would be equally isolated were it not for the tourist routes that now pass through their villages. Khwai is situated on the northern border of Moremi Game Reserve, at the transit point for traffic between Moremi and Chobe, and Mababe is on the same route several kilometres from the southern border of Chobe National Park (Map 1.2). Local memories, confirmed by written records of travellers from the mid-nineteenth century, reveal that, until the mid-twentieth century, much of this sandveld was dotted with small and transient villages. In the nineteenth century, many of these inhabitants were Bantu-speaking refugees, fleeing from their own despotic leaders to the north, or from the upheavals caused by the *difaqane*[2] to the east and south. This was not an environment that encouraged large permanent settlements. The constantly changing hydrology of the Delta, periodic droughts, the waxing and waning of the belt of tsetse infestation, and wildlife movements, all encouraged flexible settlement patterns. The most flexible were Basarwa, whose habitation predated the Bantu-immigrants, and who remained after the last of them were driven away by the extending tsetse belt in the 1950s.

Mababe is the oldest of these villages. The ancestors of its present residents were noted in the annals of hunters such as Selous (1893), who were attracted by its famed wildlife populations. However, it was not until the early twentieth century that the village became a semi-permanent site at the southern end of the Mababe Depression, returned to in most years at the beginning of the rainy season. Khwai village was formed in 1964, the core of which was an extended family that was moved out of the recently proclaimed Moremi Game Reserve. Over time they were joined by relatives who had lived in the area between them and Gudigwa. Gudigwa has only existed in its present position since 1988, made up of Basarwa who had lived scattered throughout a large section of the northern sandveld. They were brought together by the government with the promise that if they aggregated they would be provided with basic services – a promise that was as yet unfulfilled a decade later. During my fieldwork, Mababe had a population of about 290, Khwai 360 and Gudigwa 600.

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[2] *Difaqane* (or *mfeqane* in Nguni languages) is the name given to a period of upheaval in the early nineteenth century, particularly the 1820s and 1830s, triggered in part by the expansion of the Zulu kingdom. The resulting wars and population movements affected much of southern Africa.

Although the residents of Mababe, Khwai and Gudigwa find themselves in similar contexts to Basarwa throughout Botswana in many respects, their situation is fundamentally different in two ways. Firstly, their villages have no non-Basarwa residents (with the exception on one family in Khwai). Elsewhere in Botswana, apart from a few small settlements, Basarwa generally live either on the peripheries of other people's villages, or in government-created settlements where they may constitute the numerical majority, but are dominated economically and politically by resident non-Basarwa. Secondly, the competition they face over land in their region is currently with the government and tourist industry alone, and not with cattle-keepers. This has been largely due to the presence of tsetse fly, and more recently the designation of large parts of the northern sandveld as Wildlife Management Areas, both factors that preclude the keeping of stock.

'Basarwa' is the Setswana word their neighbours, the government (and now often they themselves) use to refer to the category of people whose main markers of difference from dominant society include: a foraging past; speaking a Khoisan, rather than a Bantu, language; and material poverty. An estimated 50,000 people who live in Botswana carry this label, and a similar number are spread through Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Angola. This category, however, encompasses five broad linguistic families, and over ten distinct languages, all of whom have their own labels for themselves (Barnard 1992a:22-27). Batswana refer to Basarwa who live near the permanent channels of the Delta, such as at Khwai, as *Basarwa ba noka,* or 'River Bushmen', and those who live in the sandveld as *Basarwa ba motlhaba,* or 'Sand Bushmen'. The people of Khwai and Gudigwa call themselves ***Bugakhwe*** (***Boga*** means 'dry country', to their neighbours, the //Anikhwe) and Mababe ***Ts'exa***. Bugakhwe and Handakhwe speak related, but distinct, Khwe languages (Fig. 2.1). ***Khwe*** in these languages means 'person', and they often refer to themselves by this overarching term, or ***Xukhwe,*** and their own language as ***Xukhwedam*** (***dam*** means 'tongue'). Bugakhwe and Handakhwe have nicknames for each other as well: Mababe often call their neighbours from Khwai ***//'Amdzira*** (thorn monkeys), and Khwai reciprocate with the name ***Ts'exa,*** which has gained more common usage than other names of origin, despite its pejorative meaning (***Ts'ii-xa*** - 'large buttocks'). As aggregations of bands that several generations ago lived more often apart than together, Bugakhwe and Ts'exa have a number of other names of origin as well, which are listed in Appendix One. 'San' and 'Bushmen' are not labels they use of themselves.

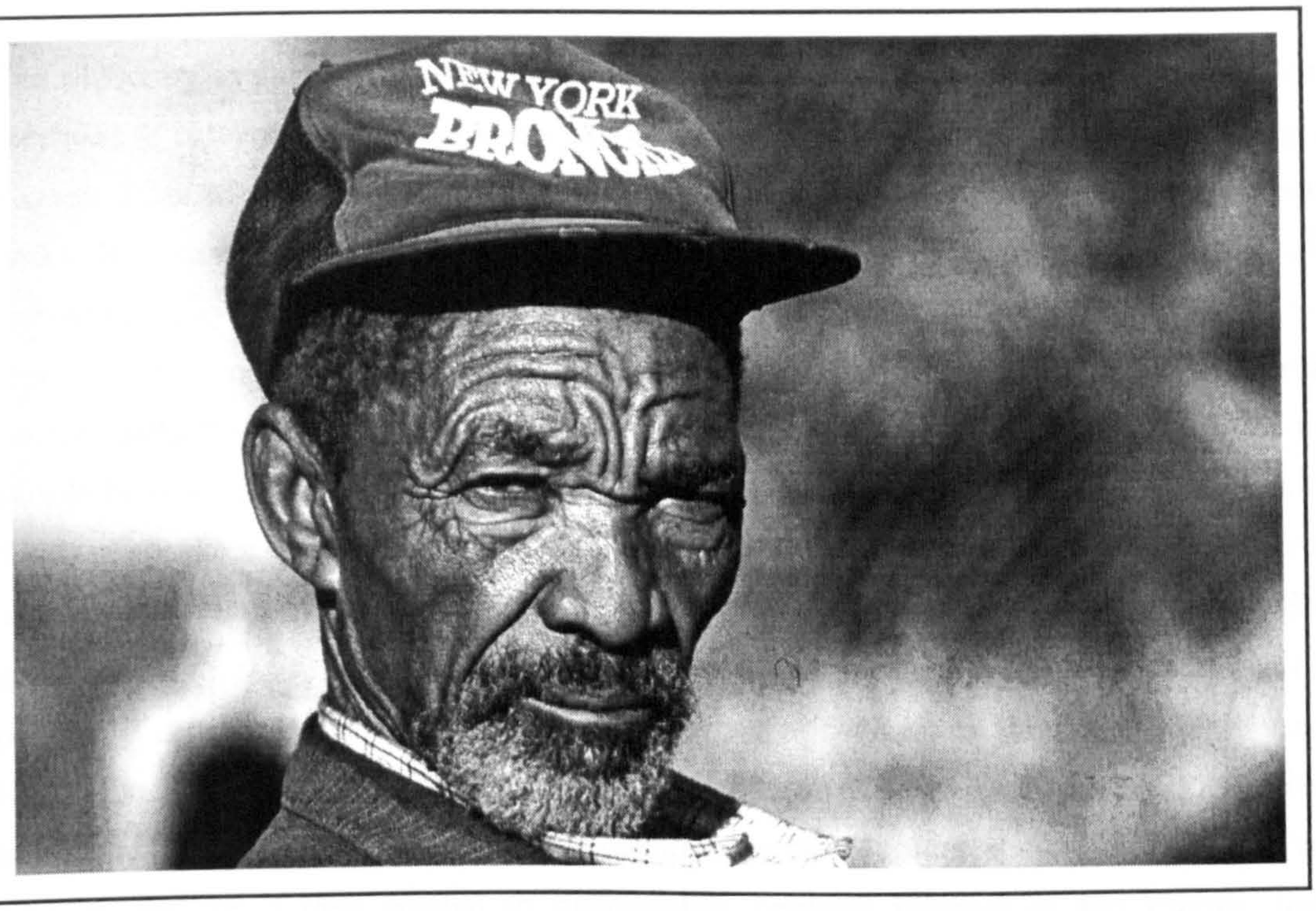

Plate 1.3: Kebuelemang Kgosietsile, headman of Mababe.

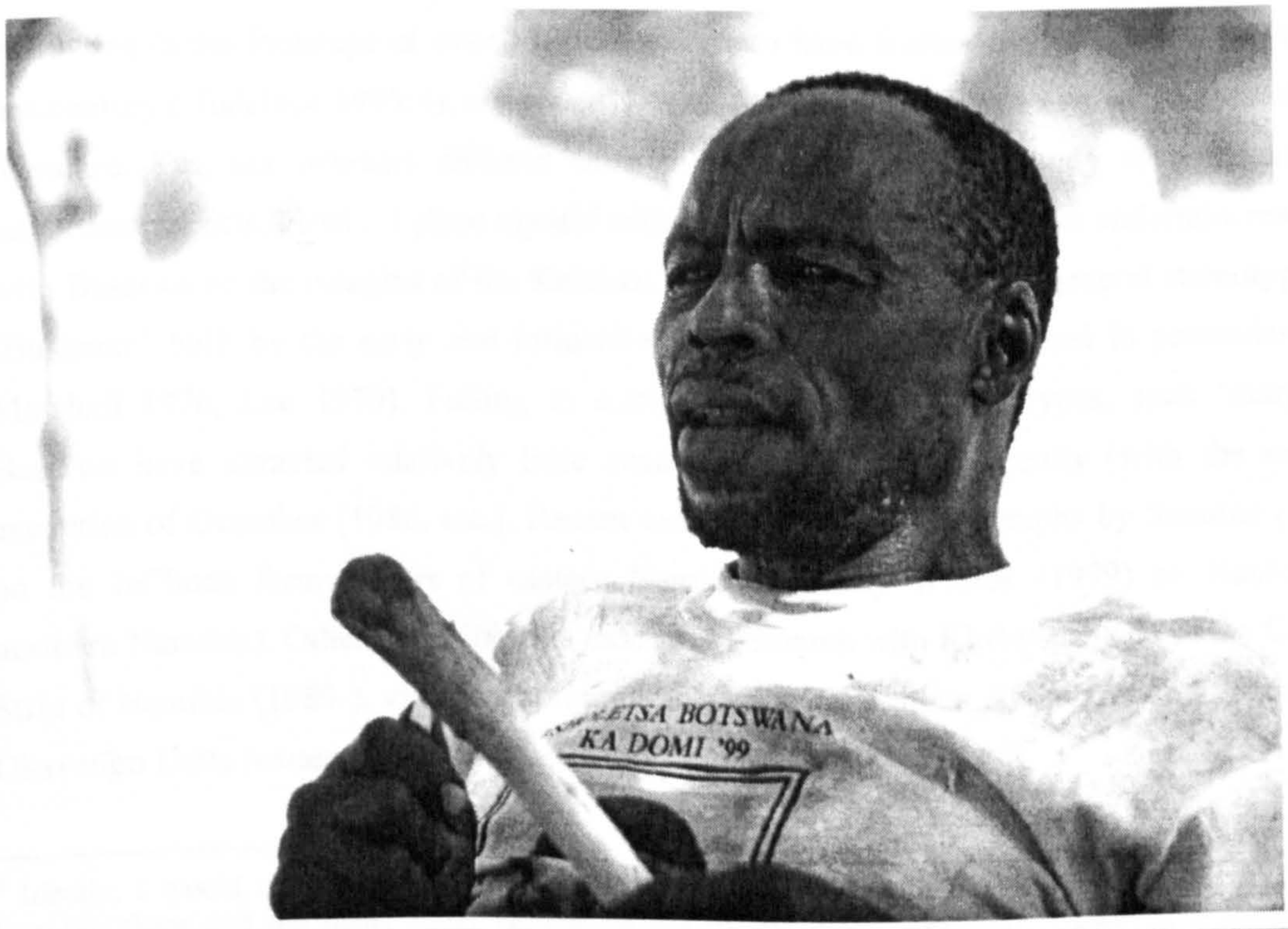

Plate 1.4: Ts'ima Thamaga, headman of Gudigwa.

The difficulty in finding an appropriate name for Basarwa reflects both the propensity for outsiders to categorise and label these people, as well as the contradictions inherent in giving a single label to such a varied category of people. The most commonly used umbrella term within Botswana is 'Basarwa', which I use here. This term, however, has no meaning outside Botswana, nor to many Western observers, so I use 'Bushmen' when referring to wider representations of people who carry this label.[3] To further compound the contradictions of such classifications, Bugakhwe and Ts'exa defy the neat distinction in the minds of many people between black Bantu-speakers with negroid characteristics and short, yellow skinned Khoisan-speakers. In common with most Khwe-speaking Basarwa who live on the northern and eastern fringes of the Kalahari, they generally look physiologically similar to their Bantu-speaking neighbours, being tall and dark skinned. Western observers have tended to call such people 'Black Bushmen', although locally this is a misnomer, as 'black people' is used by Khwe-speakers to refer to their non-Basarwa neighbours (despite Bantu-speakers often hardly being any blacker than themselves). If speaking in terms of colour, they refer to themselves as 'red people', or if they wanted to differentiate between themselves and shorter, lighter-skinned Basarwa, they refer to themselves as 'tall Basarwa'.

Life, land and power in the northern sandveld of Ngamiland

Following in the footsteps of over 130 researchers to have worked with 'Bushmen' over the last century (Hudelson 1995:4), my research took me into a field with a substantial academic literature. Yet, my interests differed from those of much of this body of work in two important respects. Firstly, I place myself within a more recent initiative to undertake research with Basarwa on the margins of the Kalahari, and also marginal to the general stereotypes of 'Bushmen' built by the early and influential ethnographies of Ju/'hoansi in particular (e.g. Marshall 1976, Lee 1979). Failing to conform to prevalent stereotypes, such 'marginal' Basarwa have attracted relatively little academic interest until recently (with the notable exception of Guenther [1986, etc.]. Recent examples are the monographs by Suzman (1997) on the Ju/'hoan farmworkers of eastern Namibia, and by Widlok (1999) on Hai//om in northern Namibia). Other than Köhler's extensive research with Khwe-speakers in the Caprivi Strip of Namibia (1989-), virtually nothing has been written about Khwe-speakers around the Okavango Delta (except for several brief monographs by Heinz [n.d.]).

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[3] Ideally, I would refer to residents of the northern sandveld as 'Khwe' in my text, to distinguish between them and the many other people known by the label 'Basarwa'. However, a three-tiered system of nomenclature, with 'Bushmen' for southern Africa as a whole, 'Basarwa' for Botswana, and 'Khwe' for the northern sandveld would be stretching the limits of coherence. Also, while I stress that the situation of Basarwa in the northern sandveld is in many ways unique, there are important wider commonalities implied by the label Basarwa, not least the ways in which it structurally positions the bearers of the name in the social and political landscape of Botswana.

The second respect in which my research with Basarwa was in a different mould from that of much of my predecessors was in my research interests. Rather than framing Basarwa in terms of cultural patterns associated with a hunting and gathering past (or of their antithesis; a foraging underclass created by relations of capital), I was interested in the contemporary experiences of ethnic categorisations, and the locally ascribed values and meanings associated with carrying the label 'Mosarwa'. I started my research from the assumption that the label *Basarwa*, or its singular form *Mosarwa,* is not simply descriptive of a group of people who display - or have until recently displayed - socio-economic systems and practices associated with a foraging lifestyle, such as sharing, egalitarianism and nomadism. I instead took this label as defining political spaces of policy and negotiation (or lack of), and the power relations within these spaces. In other words, how the values and practices associated with being Mosarwa, which could include practices such as foraging (and it becomes inconsequential that some of these may no longer be practised), structure relations between Basarwa and others in an environment where 'Mosarwa' is a highly value-laden term. From this perspective, one of the most defining features of Basarwa is their shared experience of subjugation and poverty.[4] This did not preclude my interest in the classical anthropological institutions that my predecessors have already documented for Basarwa elsewhere, such as land tenure, leadership and kinship. Nonetheless, my interest in these institutions was inasmuch as they related to present struggles to gain access to land, resources and political authority.

I soon realised from my fieldwork that local struggles were most often related to control over natural resources, particularly land. The primary context in which these struggles took place was the official Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programme. CBNRM initiatives were being introduced in an array of rural areas in southern and eastern Africa, and Ngamiland was no exception. I found that in the northern sandveld, CBNRM was becoming an arena in which the central issue of control over land and resources *as Basarwa* was being negotiated. In some senses, the issues Basarwa faced in the introduction of CBNRM were common to rural dwellers throughout Botswana. But their situation as *Basarwa* (whether or not they are actually hunter-gatherers), within a dominant economy of

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[4] Guenther (1986) and Saugestad (1998:61-2) have made the same observation. These are two scholars whose research interests parallel my own, although their approaches are somewhat different. Guenther stresses the 'continuity' of Sesarwa cultural forms, while my concern is more with the contemporary dynamics (particularly of inequality) in which practices, ideas and narratives associated with culture are formed. Saugestad focuses on the relationship between Basarwa and the state, as I do. However, hers is largely a view from above, focusing mostly on political encounters in public arenas. Mine is more from below, exploring the local-level nature of such encounters.

pastoralists, added an additional layer to their struggles. I argue that in a large part ethnicity has structured the relationship between Basarwa and those with political power, being the central logic in maintaining, and challenging, various forms of domination. It is also the lens through which problems – and their solutions – are often codified locally, thus making it a key axis of difference. Nonetheless, it will become evident through the many narratives reproduced in this thesis that a wide range of perspectives on ethnicity and identity emerge from among Basarwa themselves, which highlight the many other (internal and external) axes of difference, as well as the contradictory experiences of carrying the label 'Mosarwa'.

The title of this thesis reflects the three key themes that emerged from my fieldwork; *Life, land and power.*

Life: This thesis is above all about the ways in which people in the northern sandveld have attempted to shape their livelihoods. With its narrow implications of subsistence options, perhaps 'livelihoods' is not as good a word as a direct translation of *botshelo*, the Setswana word for 'life'. 'Looking for life' (*go senka botshelo*) was a common phrase used to encompass the multitude of actions, plans and aspirations, that go into making life better and easier, on a communal as well as individual basis. To take an example, Galenkitse was a man in his late thirties who I met one day in Mababe. Not recognising him as a usual resident, I asked him what had brought him there, to which he answered:

> We move around our relatives looking for life, and, when we find it, we stay there a while.

He called himself a Mosarwa – it didn't matter to him whether he was Ts'exa, Danisani or Shua – 'we are all of the same womb', he told me. He was born around Puduhudu, grew up in Motopi, then moved with his parents to Xhana, before moving around the district alone, his latest stop being Mababe. This contemporary form of 'nomadism' is one aspect of the flexibility that residents of the northern sandveld have had to build into their lives in order to maximise their livelihood options. It also provides an example of the way in which institutions associated with Basarwa find new expressions and meanings in contemporary contexts. Considering how livelihoods are constituted involves not only the bread-and-butter issues of feeding oneself and one's family, but also the wider frameworks of meaning in which these strategies take place, which affect the legitimacy of different forms of 'looking for life'.

Land: Access to, and control over, land has become *the* central issue in negotiating the possibility of finding a secure 'life' in the northern sandveld. Basarwa have been steadily

alienated from the land on which they have lived, particularly through the creation of national parks and game reserves; a recurring theme in the way Basarwa talk about their present circumstances. Although not intended as such, CBNRM has been appropriated locally as an opportunity to reverse this alienation and assert land rights.

Power: Contestation over land and the resources on it are by very definition questions of power. In an environment where the state attempts to control access to local resources, contesting these controls means entering into dialogue with the state. This has been a multifaceted struggle; one not only over resources themselves, but also a *symbolic* contestation over the values and meanings attached to resources, and the various activities associated with them, such as hunting. My focus is not on bureaucratic power alone, but on the individuals and groups whose actions crosscut, resist and reproduce the power relations of the state. Power and relations of inequality are an essential consideration in constructions of social difference.

These three themes run as threads through this thesis, which engages primarily with two bodies of academic interest. The first is the large and varied body of scholarship that has made as its subject Bushmen or Basarwa. My interest in this sphere is in *identity*, which I define as a means of defining relations of difference with categorical others. This thesis explores the conditions under which an identity as 'Basarwa' has become salient, and the role of narratives of identity in contestation over resources, particularly in asserting a sense of autonomy and legitimacy in the face of dominant laws and values. The second body of interest is *development*, specifically the volume of literature that has been produced in the past decade on CBNRM. CBNRM initiatives are usually assessed in terms of their efficacy in achieving more effective local-level conservation. My prime interest instead is what CBNRM *does* as a development programme, and how it is used as a tool to both extend and challenge local manifestations of state power. Most stakeholders in the northern sandveld have a belief in the necessity and good of 'development', but there are crucial epistemological gaps in what the concept means to different people (cf. Robertson 1984:4, Abram 1998:4). Concepts of development are bound up in government agendas, issues of identity, and, increasingly explicitly, land. This thesis is thus simultaneously a study of identity and of 'development', their epistemology and their politics, and how these processes have been played out in a remote corner of Botswana.

Anthropology, representation and the Kalahari

The University of Edinburgh, from where I write this thesis, has in its Anatomy department a little-publicised collection of human skulls, head casts, and skeletons. These were collected from around the world during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the Phrenological Society, a pseudo-scientific society that specialised in the curious task of inferring mental faculties from the morphology of skulls. Among this bizarre collection are several 'Boschiesmans' from southern Africa. One of these skulls is accompanied by a folded piece of paper that purports to bear the title of its original inhabitant: 'Matroos the Boschiesman'. In the same collection lies another Bushmen skull simply labelled 'Robber'. The accompanying notes of the *Phrenological Journal and Miscellany* (Phrenological Society 1832:68) reveal that Robber's skull was presented to the Society by Mr Thomas Pringle of Cape Town in 1824. It goes on to explain what was deduced about the character of Robber from his skull:

> The skull was sent to Edinburgh to be examined, and the character of the hapless individual to be inferred by a Mr Simpson... 'The organisation is essentially savage, and the character, with occasional gleams of kindliness and sagicity, would be almost entirely animal... etc.' (ibid.)

What the Phrenological Society deduced of the character of Matroos the Boschiesman remains unknown. However, unfolding the piece of paper that accompanies his skull reveals a remarkable testimony, entitled, 'The Dying Confession of Matroos the Boschiesman':

> I was a free Boschiesman. Born in Boschiesmans land. My name is Matroos, engiven to me by one of my first masters. I was in the service of several Cattle Farmers along the Borders of the [Cape] Colony at the New Plantation but never would enslave myself to any of them, leaving their service and wandering about – preferring an independent life to servitude. I went marauding and murdering through the country and for a long time I escaped punishment. But at length stealing some horses from the Farmers I was pursued and surrounded, but scorned to surrender myself though repeatedly called upon to do so. I defended myself with my Assegais [spears] and poisoned arrows as long as I had any left, and then made an obstinate resistance by hurling stones at my Pursuers, but at length I was mortally wounded, and am now dying, being as I believe only about 18 Years of Age.
>
> Agter Sneuberg 182-

Overleaf, it explains that:

> This statement was drawn up by Major Rogers, Guardian of Slaves, who accompanied Justice Burton on the Circuit, when the skull of Matroos was presented to him at Graaf Reniet
>
> W.M. Ford

This reminder, from a very different time and a very different place than the northern sandveld of Ngamiland in the closing decades of the twentieth century, nevertheless starkly demonstrates some of the key issues that continue to haunt - albeit in a more subtle way - representations of people now more commonly known as Bushmen or Basarwa. In the early years of the nineteenth century, characterising such people as 'savage' and 'animal-like' was essential to ideologically justify the hunting parties that massacred so many thousands of Bushmen, like 'Robber' and 'Matroos', along the expanding colonial frontiers of southern Africa. However, as Europe's empires continued to spread, the image of Bushmen and other similarly classified 'primitive people' gained the Rousseauian romanticism of the 'noble savage' (Barnard 2000:20-22). Savage, yes, but also living exemplars of an exotic lifestyle that Europeans had left behind millennia ago.[5] Not only did their skulls and skeletons end up in Western collections of curiosities but some unfortunate victims were also skinned and stuffed, to be displayed alongside various other trophies (Robertson 1993). Others, such as 'Klikko the dancing Bushman' (Parsons 1988), and Saartje Baartman the 'Hottentot Venus' (Morris 1996), were brought to the fairgrounds of Europe to be displayed as live curiosities to satiate Europe's hunger for its self-defining inversion (cf. Mitchell 1994).

The hidden vaults of some museum and university collections are one of the few reminders today of such obsessions, no longer considered appropriate in today's societies – African or Western. Yet there remain some continuities. Basarwa continue to occupy a unique position in the imagination of both Western and African observers, a position that is conceptually different from the other longstanding inhabitants of southern Africa. They have also continued to draw unparalleled interest from Western researchers, giving credence to the proverbial joke that you were more likely to bump into an anthropologist than a Bushman in the Kalahari. They have found themselves as the object of raging academic debates about the nature of their – and our – past, as well as being used as fodder to justify or break down different paradigms to which, like clay, they have been moulded.

Basarwa have without doubt been an icon to anthropologists who otherwise share very little common theoretical ground. Evolutionists have regarded Basarwa as a window to our stone-age past (e.g. Tobias 1978). The interests of structuralists have hinged on the implicit belief that their assumed pristineness and simplicity made them clear exemplars from which to study

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[5] The transition in western imagination of 'Bushmen' from vermin on the colonial frontier to noble savages - a quintessential 'other' to the West - has been well documented (e.g. Guenther 1980, Tomaselli 1993, Wilmsen 1995a,b, Gordon 1992, Barnard 1996).

social, cultural and economic structures (e.g. Heinz 1994[1966]). For social ecologists, they have displayed a unique relationship with the environment (e.g. Tanaka 1980), and for world systems theorists they provided a trope of capitalist underdevelopment (e.g. Wilmsen 1989b). Experimental postmodernists (e.g. Shostak 1981) have used Basarwa to construct intensely personal narratives linking Western researcher with Mosarwa informant, and poststructuralists have found them an ideal example of the fictive reification of non-Western people in the West's own alter-ego. Of course, we no longer examine the morphology of skulls and make grand pronouncements on the characteristics of their erstwhile inhabitants. We may not have the pretension of the anonymous author of 'The Dying Confession of Matroos the Boschiesman' to construct so blatantly a narrative of someone else's short and miserable life, and then attribute it to their own authorship. Yet how much are we still guilty of perpetuating the practice of creating images of our anthropological objects that are in a large part actually our own images? And how much control in shaping these images do those after whom we claim to fashion them actually have?

This opens up some of the debates about representing other people's lives that fundamentally challenged the discipline of anthropology from the late 1970s (cf. Said 1979, Clifford 1983, Clifford and Marcus 1986). These are debates that the sub-discipline of hunter-gatherer studies has had to grapple with perhaps more deeply than many of its sister sub-disciplines. Aspects of these debates were brought to the fore by revisionist challenges (particularly Wilmsen 1989b, Wilmsen and Denbow 1990) to the long-hallowed assumptions that had underpinned much research in the Kalahari; that contemporary Bushmen represented a way of life that had been universal for much of humankind's history. The revisionist argument that Bushmen foragers were instead an underclass created by the rise and collapse of mercantile capital in the Kalahari in the second half of the nineteenth century stoked vociferous exchanges that came to be labelled as 'the great Kalahari Debate' (Kuper 1993, Barnard 1992b, 1996), the embers of which continue to glow a decade later.

While some of the heat generated by the Kalahari Debate is yet to die down, it is evident that it prompted much soul-searching, especially by those who came to be labelled as 'traditionalists', who as a result generally softened their quasi-isolationist stance (cf. Solway and Lee 1990, Lee 1992). Through all these perambulations, however, Basarwa have remained primarily *icons of the past* (Whyte 1995) to Western popular and academic thought. Debates as to whether they are 'products or survivors of history' (Gordon and Spiegel 1993:89) has failed to lift many observers out of this rut, serving only to perpetuate the longstanding academic subjugation of Basarwa as a people of the past. Moreover, academic

arguments about how 'we' understand 'them' left very little space for exploring how Basarwa understand and represent themselves, a gap acknowledged by some longstanding Basarwa ethnographers (e.g. Barnard 1996:247). By finally laying to rest the myth of the primitive isolate and bringing to the fore the contact situation between Basarwa, their neighbours, and capital, the stage has been set to carry research with Basarwa into the present. However, attempts to understand Basarwa ethnicity, society and economics in the context of contemporary socio-economic structures and relations of power have been remarkably scattered (although not absent), considering the volume of literature that continues to be produced on the Kalahari.

Attempts to hear Basarwa voices themselves have also been remarkably scattered. 'The Bushmen were remarkably inarticulate, perhaps the most damning evidence of their powerlessness', notes Gordon (1992:8) in his historical rewriting of the place of Bushmen in Namibian history. Basarwa voices may not be heard in libraries and national archives, but of course they are verbally as articulate as anyone else. With a few recent and notable exceptions, such as Suzman (1997) who wrote extensively for his doctoral thesis on narratives by Ju/'hoansi in Omaheke, Namibia, of their own identity, Basarwa voices in print have been restricted to non-academic spheres, such as reports (e.g. Mogwe 1992, le Roux 1999) and the media. Academia is yet to allow itself to be significantly influenced by what Basarwa are saying about themselves, their identity, their history, their socio-economic and political contexts, and how *they* negotiate their presence (cf. Skotness [1996] on how *others* have negotiated their presence) in the physical and socio-political landscapes in which they live. For people whose own voices were so little heard, and who have been so heavily commoditised, both scientifically (Gordon 1992:3) and economically (Buntman 1994, Whyte 1995), it is all the more important that a new generation of research takes place *with* (rather than *on*) Basarwa, and according to priorities that they themselves define (cf. Lee 1992:42).

Re-conceptualising Basarwa in terms of their past

Basarwa have found themselves the subjects of a discipline whose very interest in them has for the most part depended on their categorisation as 'hunter-gatherers'. In this sense, hunter-gatherer studies in the Kalahari became a self-sustaining and mutually informing academic 'region', in which a body of anthropologists produced ethnographies that were reworked versions, inversions, and revisions of previous accounts (cf. Fardon 1990). In this manner, studies with Basarwa centred around their position as hunter-gatherers, a problematic that most research with Basarwa has been aimed at either supporting or challenging. Moving beyond these parameters involves rethinking the very terms by which we have come to

conceptualise Basarwa. In doing so, we are able to follow general theoretical shifts in social science: from harmonious social structure to contestation; from scientific regularity to idiosyncratic experience. As Albert (1997) has asserted from research with indigenous people in Amazonia, our focus needs to shift from the architecture of social units and symbolic forms that we associate with hunting and gathering, to the dynamics of cultural, social and political self-production. These are dynamics that need to be contextualised within historical transformations induced largely by the encroachment of the state. Removing Basarwa from the persistent image of apolitical societies existing in some premodern equilibrium (textbook examples of Wolf's [1982] 'people without history') opens the possibility of analysis of social differentiation, change, and linkages to the larger political economy.

Although Wilmsen's (1989b) revisionism was timely in its challenge to the assumptions that came with encapsulating Basarwa under 'hunter-gatherer' studies, he ignores the crucial issue of how *Basarwa represent themselves*, which is, at times, in terms of a hunting and gathering past. Contrary to the arguments of the revisionist critique, hunting and gathering therefore remains important to our analysis, but not in the traditionalist sense from its defining role in shaping a reified 'Sesarwa culture'. The salience of hunting and gathering is more as a *symbol* that carries meaning to both Basarwa and their neighbours in the contemporary political economy of Botswana, especially considering contemporary experiences of dispossession and alienation from land and wildlife. This perspective leads us away from the hitherto dominant notion of a Sesarwa 'culture' shaped by their status as hunter-gatherers, to one more in the sense expounded by Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:27) as, 'the semantic space, the field of signs and practices, in which human beings construct and represent themselves and others, and hence their societies and histories'. Following their lead, Suzman (1997:209) argues that, 'hunter-gatherer studies in the new millennium should rather focus on how hunter-gatherer identities are appropriated, constructed and negotiated and, furthermore, how the imagery of the 'hunter-gatherer' with its connotations of aboriginality and authenticity are invoked whether in the market place or the political arena'.

I argue that the past is important in understanding Basarwa identities, not because they represent leftovers of a prehistoric way of life, but because *contemporary* contexts make 'hunting and gathering' an important label of self-designation by Basarwa in certain contexts. Although thoroughly debunked in academic representations of Basarwa, primordialism thus paradoxically surfaces in the ways Basarwa represent themselves in terms of their own past. However, I avoid the sterile pursuits of either buying into or deconstructing these emic narratives (cf. Sharp 1996:87), and instead focus on the role they play in identity formation

and mobilisation. The past is therefore of prime importance in considering representations of Basarwa, not because Basarwa are 'people of the past' in any sense, but because the past is contentious, and can be mined for arguments about the present or future.

Linking development and identity

'Development', in its loosest sense, refers to efforts of planned social and economic change. Since the word was coined in this context in the post World War II reconstruction of Europe, its connotation of economic growth has proved remarkably pervasive among its myriad of implementers. Attempts to break out beyond a narrow economic agenda and link it with wider issues have stressed that the poverty it is attempting to address is as much about a loss of rights, freedom, culture, dignity and environment as low income. It was not until 1993, however, that the United Nations Development Programme's annual Human Development Report (UNDP 1993) explicitly stressed that quality of life is as important as quantity of economic growth. The contestation over whose priorities define quality of life, and thus the form and direction that 'development' should take is a large part of this thesis. Such definitions are, needless to say, dependent on local values and meanings, and thus intimately tied to concepts of identity.

However, the link between development and identity is deeper and more complex than this conception of development alone would suggest. The way in which people understand themselves and their place in the world affects priorities in development, but even more importantly, representations of people are also a means of exercising power. A well-developed literature exists on the power of development discourse, a form of representing and understanding people and geopolitical spaces that allows the exercise of power over them (e.g. Escobar 1995, Crush 1996, Peet and Watts 1996, Leys 1996, Gardner and Lewis 1996). However, this line of analysis has generally been applied on a global scale to relations between the so-called First and Third Worlds, and not to similar processes by 'Third World' governments themselves on their own populations.

Articulating with this form of power involves contesting discourses that justify and normalise inequality, thus becoming a *cultural* struggle:

> Productive inequalities become naturalised through cultural understandings of social hierarchy that encourage popular consent. On the other hand, struggles over symbolic processes are themselves conflicts over material relations of production, the distribution of resources in society and ultimately power... . Struggles over land and environmental resources are simultaneously struggles over cultural meanings (Moore 1993:382-3).

These cultural meanings hinge on the construction of *difference*, making the struggle over development one that is in part a struggle over the content of difference, and the values associated with being different (cf. Arce and Long 1999). Development, as Escobar (1995:15) notes, operates *as* (and not just *in*) an arena of cultural contestation and identity construction. Social movements struggle not only for goods and services - although these are crucial for people on the breadline - but also the very definition of life, economy, nature and society. In short, they face a cultural struggle. I therefore maintain a focus throughout this thesis on the simultaneity of material and symbolic struggles in development.

A strength of the postmodern turn in critical development theory has been a vigorous focus on the diversity of local priorities in development. One of the harshest critics of the hegemonic discourses of conventional development, Arturo Escobar, suggests the importance of illuminating alternatives that challenge this hegemonic discourse. The nature of such alternatives, he argues, can be most fruitfully gleaned from the specific manifestations of such alternatives in concrete local settings:

> The deconstruction of development, coupled with the local ethnographies... can be important elements for a new type of visibility and audibility of forms of cultural difference and hybridisation (1995:223).

I regard this thesis as one such local ethnography. I follow Escobar's advice (1995:16) that it is important that our texts do not just deconstruct development, but construct new ways of seeing and acting based on these local ethnographies. The milieu in which I endeavour to do this in the northern sandveld is the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Programme.

Community Based Natural Resource Management

Having only been implemented in earnest since the mid-1990s in Botswana, much of my analysis of CBNRM concerns its introduction into the villages of the northern sandveld, and the contestation that has occurred over what form it should take in these areas. CBNRM reflects a wider change in approaches to conservation that gathered pace during the 1990s. This new approach claims to reverse the 'fortress' style of conservation that had become so prevalent, particularly in Africa, by allowing residents on the peripheries of parks and reserves to be directly involved in managing, and thus benefiting from, the natural resources in their vicinity. CBNRM is thus aimed at making local-level conservation more effective, while simultaneously promoting local-level development. In Botswana, the CBNRM programme made it possible for certain villages, including the villages of the northern

sandveld, to be allocated a pre-demarcated Controlled Hunting Area (CHA) with a predetermined annual wildlife offtake quota, which they could then use for their own benefit. While all potential beneficiaries of CBNRM face common issues in its implementation, these issues are more pronounced for Basarwa, whose history of marginalisation from authority over land accentuates their stakes in the CBNRM programme. In this sense, their context provides as it were a lens that magnifies and clarifies more general dynamics of CBNRM that non-Basarwa may prompt as well, albeit in not such a visible manner.

In an article entitled *Transforming rural hunters to conservationists*, two proponents of CBNRM, Gibson and Marks (1995), extol the virtues of the shift to conservation approaches in southern Africa typified by CBNRM. Their approach rests on the principle that:

> Conservation policies will only work if local communities receive sufficient benefits to change their behaviour from taking wildlife to conserving it (1995:944).

From this viewpoint, the ideological assumptions that can underpin CBNRM-type programmes are clear. Local people (however they may be integrated into such programmes) form 'communities', and without intervention they are 'takers' of wildlife, but with intervention they can become 'conservers' of wildlife. The carrot-and-stick approach implies that policy implementers, through providing suitable (assumedly monetary) benefits, are able to 'transform' rural dwellers into conservationists. Yet, these statements are more than simply assumptions. By representing local people as being 'takers of wildlife', they invite intervention. The form of their intervention is also facilitated by the existence of cohesive 'communities' that can be moulded to adopt official priorities of conservation. This is one example of how a seemingly progressive programme like CBNRM can, under scrutiny, be seen to be little different from the paternalistic and centrist approaches to conservation and development that have preceded it. This thesis will demonstrate that the CBNRM programme in the northern sandveld delivers a decidedly limited form of decentralisation of management over resources. In fact, it has so far promoted the opposite; the extension of state power into an area that it had hitherto been marginal. Nonetheless, the introduction of the CBNRM programme into the northern sandveld has, I argue, inadvertantly assisted in the vitally important function of opening up debate, in the political arena, between Basarwa and representatives of the government, on issues of resource tenure rights.

Much of the literature on CBNRM in southern and eastern Africa has started from the assumption that CBNRM is primarily a *conservation* programme, and has thus been aimed at addressing its efficacy as such. I instead frame CBNRM as a *development* intervention, and

use the established literature on development to guide my analysis of it. The sub-discipline of development studies perhaps most accentuates the divide between theoretical and applied anthropology. It is a divide I have had to try to bridge as I combine analysis of the contestation over meanings with the very bread and butter issues of sustaining a livelihood. I have attempted to benefit from both the tools of applied anthropology and associated disciplines, and the rigour and depth of more academic anthropology. Doing so involves bridging not just methods, but languages and audiences that often diverge as well. The strength of anthropology has been increasingly in tracing and considering the poignant ways in which people meet the conditions that shape their lives (McCall 1996:44), which can provide a contribution to a more context-specific and locally-sensitive approach to examining the dynamics of CBNRM. This is a method of research in which I place myself firmly in the centre.

Relationships and writing

I spent the fifteen months of research for this thesis between Maun and the villages of the northern sandveld. In Maun I cultivated relationships with tourism operators, and officials of the various government ministries who held sway over the northern sandveld, particularly: the Department of Wildlife and National Parks; the District Council; the Remote Area Development Office; the Department of Animal Health and Production; and the Land Board. Many of these officials I would also meet in the frequent meetings I attended in the villages. In Maun I had access as well to the residents of the northern sandveld who had a second home there, although most of my time was spent in their home villages. In the villages I was able to take the time to join in the daily activities of my hosts, whether it was sitting in the shade arguing about politics, or camping out in the bush cutting thatching grass to sell. My knowledge of Setswana, more of which was generally spoken in local conversations than Bugakhwedam or Ts'exadam, proved invaluable in saving both my hosts and myself the tedium of continual questioning. I could instead allow conversations to take their own course and simply listen in. For this reason, local concepts are reproduced in whichever language I heard them expressed. Although I learnt the basics of Bugakhwedam and Ts'exadam, the ease of communicating in Setswana – which many of my younger informants spoke as a first language – meant I never mastered them.

Over time, I formed strong relationships with some individuals. Some were old men who enjoyed spending hours talking about their experiences, like Isoo whose identity card claimed he was born in 1887 (although the age regiment he had joined indicated 1908 would be more accurate), and Kebuelemang, the headman of Mababe (Plate 1.3). Others were middle-aged,

like Idea the entrepreneur from Mababe (Plate 5.6), and Moses, who always seemed to be mired in controversy. Those to whom I related to easiest were the young men, who by virtue of their education inevitably played a leading role in the Community Trust committees of each village; people like Merafe, Oral, KB and Brown. I found it hardest to form friendships with women, and although I spoke to as many women as men, the connotations of forming close friendships with single women or married women whose husbands I did not know well meant that forming such relationships was not easy. Women played an important role in local politics, and were often particularly outspoken on issues such as land rights. The voices and perspectives of young and old women form an important part of this thesis, but my deeper conversations were often held with men rather than women. Katrin did spend some time with me in the villages, and undertook some activities with women that it would have been inappropriate for me to do, but nonetheless my access to women's communal and individual worlds was limited. This is an important one of the many biases that my ethnography inevitably contains.

Arriving in the northern sandveld to commence my research, my (white) skin colour spoke louder than any of my words could as to my intentions in living there for the coming months. The residents of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa were well used to white people. Many knew whites as their employers, usually in the safari industry, or in the South African mines where many men had been part of the migrant labour system from the 1950s to 1980s. Those who had been conscripted into the South African Defence Force in Namibia knew whites as their commanders. They spoke of mixed experiences in these relationships, of both benevolence and racism. They all knew whites as tourists, passing through their areas marvelling at what they themselves saw as commonplace. In Mababe, they knew whites as people who once came to their empty village, trashed their belongings, and defecated in their homes, at a time that they had relocated *en masse* to a gathering area for several months. Others knew whites with whom they went out hunting; they provided the licence and the white man provided the gun and transport. Still others knew whites as representatives of the burgeoning NGO community in Maun who offered their services to villages such as their own. Some women knew white men who had kept them surreptitiously as concubines in their younger years, and some men knew white men who posed as ivory buyers, only to find they were undercover police agents. In all these varied experiences of people with white skins, the one common thread was that whites were people with wealth and power; 'half-God' in the metaphor of Mma Tiro,[6] a middle aged woman with whose family I often stayed.

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[6] In Botswana, adults are often known by their teknonyms (i.e. by the names of their children). Although this is a Setswana practice, residents of the northern sandveld have adopted it as well. *Mma* -

Having grown up in rural areas of Botswana, and speaking Setswana as a second language, I was used to occupying an ambiguous position in most social contexts. Nonetheless, it was very difficult for me to escape these uncomfortable stereotypes, deserving as some of them may have been. The most enduring suspicion of my motives was prompted by the timing of my stay; that I was after their land. This was a lucrative proposition for a number of tourism operators who hoped that CHAs in the northern sandveld would become available for sub-lease under the impending CBNRM programme. Over time such suspicions faded, but I faced the enduring expectation that my endeavour would produce tangible benefit to my hosts. One reflection of this was in the name I was given; *Thuso*, a Setswana word meaning 'Assistance'. Expectations that my research would be of tangible benefit were sometimes presented in terms of immediate material goods. When I first introduced myself to the headman of Mababe as being interested in writing about the lives of people in his village, he invited me into his hut and told me to sit down. 'Are you ready to write?' He asked me. I nodded eagerly, pen at the ready. 'Write…', he commenced, 'Tea, sugar, maize meal, trousers… these are the things I want you to buy for me before you next come here', and then he stood up and left. At other times, expectations were framed in terms of the results from my research. For example, soon after I had commenced my fieldwork in Mababe, I met with the committee that they had elected to oversee their proposed Community Trust. One member expressed his concern that my research would be of local benefit:

> Many people have come here, seen our lives and written our desires, but they have changed nothing. They all write things down like you do. We have seen nothing from them and they have got rich. What makes you different, that you will do according to your name [*Thuso*]?

At times, our discussions touched upon practices that the government had deemed illegal, especially hunting, and I was reminded of the double-sided potential of my research. One man who I often joined in walks through the bush laughed as we crossed the cutline into the national park in a hunt for warthog. 'At least if we are caught, we will have each other's company in jail', he joked. But then he sobered up and asked, 'What will you do with this information? Will you change our situation?'[7]

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means 'mother of - ', and *Rra* - means 'father of - '. Thus, Mma Tiro is 'the mother of Tiro', and Rra Tiro is 'the father of Tiro'. In some circumstances, *Mma* can also mean 'the wife of', so that Mma Kgosi is 'the wife of the chief' (*kgosi* means 'chief').

[7] For obvious reasons, I disguise the identity of some people I refer to, by using pseudonyms or obscuring their circumstances. Not all names are pseudonyms: some informants expressly wanted to be associated with their opinions, and others say nothing that would warrant their identity to be disguised.

The very suggestion that I could 'change their situation' spoke to me not only of (mis)conceptions of power that I had access to, but also of (mis)conceptions of my hosts' own powerlessness in the face of a system of authority that they considered had progressively impoverished them. It also spoke to me of my hosts' longstanding operation in a social structure in which goods and services were often procured by appeal to those who considered themselves superior to Basarwa. Nonetheless, with respect to the direct relationship between myself and themselves, I was made aware - particularly at the outset - that my research was subject to their continued goodwill. This was not only demonstrated in what information was shared or withheld, but also in telling me directly that if my research was contrary to their interests I would be asked to leave. Of course, the interests within each village were diverse and at times contradictory, and the only direct criticism my research elicited came from time spent speaking to the 'wrong' people; those whose social position in the village did not qualify them in the eyes of others to speak about local affairs.

Apart from becoming informally involved in some committees on a personal capacity, and assisting with logistical activities such as grant applications, my research itself was locally framed in terms of writing their *tlholego*, loosely meaning 'who we are' or 'our heritage'. Residents were well aware that most books of the region ignored their presence or said very little about their history. Writing some of these things down became a way of establishing their presence and legitimacy, a way of addressing their often-repeated complaint that, 'they don't know there are people here'. This was the best I could assume to do through my doctoral research to meet their expectations. Using extensive quotes from my informants' narratives through this thesis is a deliberate attempt to allow some of their voices to be heard. My motivation for doing so, in theoretical terms, is not to imply that Basarwa voices are in some way more 'authentic', but as a means of illuminating local conceptual and hermeneutical structures and ways of understanding the central issues which this thesis sets out to explore. This thesis is thus more than simply a collection of local perspectives on identity and development, but an attempt to account for them and explore their implications for social relationships.

I make no pretence, nonetheless, that through this thesis I let Basarwa from the northern sandveld speak for themselves. I cannot escape from the fact that it is myself who ultimately retains authorial control, who chooses which of the multivocal perspectives to include and exclude, and who has translated the narratives from Setswana into English. I have been as faithful as possible in maintaining the sentiments as I understood them in Setswana, but, as translations, they cannot be construed to be verbatim. I cannot erase myself from the product

of my ethnography; doing so would make my informants marionettes, of which I pull the invisible strings (cf. Todorov 1985:520). Ethnography is at best a conversation (Gudeman and Riviera 1990, Peterson 2000), between myself, my informants and the wider body of theory. Moreover, it is an ongoing conversation; as ethnographers we do not provide finished products (Spencer 1989:148). I do not intend this to be a watertight and final tome on life, land and power in the northern sandveld. Ethnographically, it is based on a specific moment in the history of the northern sandveld (for which reason I generally use the past tense), marked particularly by the introduction of CBNRM. Theoretically, it is subject to the changing winds of theoretical fashion. This is yet another reason why I emphasise my informants' texts: so that this work is open to be reworked and reinterpreted, as has been done with some of the theoretically maligned but ethnographically intricate earlier works with Basarwa (Kuper 1993:67).

Romanticism

In researching and writing about the lives of Basarwa, who are a prime example of the exoticising tendencies of anthropology, the spectre of romanticisation looms large. We may consider ourselves free from the delusions that led to the Kalahari's version of the Philippine's well-known Tasaday hoax; Perrot and companions being taken in August 1988 to stay with 'a small clan' of Bushmen in eastern Ngamiland who they believed 'had never been in close contact with European types before' (Perrot 1992:7), and were 'stone age simple' (1992:29). Nevertheless, the sense of a way of life that is so profoundly and irreversibly changing over even just one generation, easily produces in observers a sense of nostalgia, as it did at times in the conversations of my older informants. Making reference to the don of romanticisation in the Kalahari, Sir Laurens van der Post, Barnard (1989:113) observes that, 'The myth of the Lost World is subtle and elusive, but it exists in our work and should exist in our consciousness'. He goes on to argue that, 'Only then can we distinguish between "the Bushmen" and the Bushmen'. While making such a distinction may not be as straightforward as he suggests, his point stands that we are all victims of the van der Postian myth, and only by recognising, rather than denying, the vestiges of romanticism that we carry, can we address its effects in our own scholarship.

Choosing to focus on contemporary political process rather than attempting any kind of 'salvage anthropology' places me in danger of substituting one type of romanticism for another; that of subaltern resistance to the encroaching state. As Keesing (1992:2) wrote of his work with Kwaio in the Solomon Islands:

> In seeing that indigenous peoples have played a more active part as agents locally adapting to and reshaping outside forces, and that resistance in its varying modes has been more common and enduring than we had suspected, it is important for us not to romanticise their cultures or project onto them our idealisations of primitivity, populism or political struggle.

If it were not for the level of romanticism Basarwa have been subject to, it would go without saying that 'Bushmen do not cease to be Bushmen when they encounter other peoples or come to be dominated by them' (Barnard 1989:112). Predictions that 'the Bushmen' would imminently disappear have been a recurring theme in the accounts of early travellers (e.g. Gillmore 1878:359), colonial officers, and scholars of wildly different persuasions (e.g. Heinz 1994[1966]:210-12, Wilmsen 1995a:321). These are largely a product of either of the two dominant models of social change that Errington and Gewertz (1995:5) label *the myth of the fragile Eden*, and *the myth of inflexible tradition*. The first, in the vein of the film *The Gods Must be Crazy*, casts its subjects as unable to cope with the encroachment of external pressures, which in the end cause their world to shatter. The second is an all-or-nothing model, in which 'they' choose to become like 'us'. Neither of these models grant any cognisance to the *mutuality* of constructed history; the mutual engagement of people and institutions with different interests and resources, and the context this has provided for struggles of subsistence, identity and worth.

Romanticism hinges on the constitution of difference, which can take various forms. Difference is a central concept in anthropology, and anthropologists have been credited with both creating it (Fabian 1983, Said 1989) and eliminating it (Taussig 1987). In a thesis that is in many ways about the salience of social difference, I emphasise as well common experiences that crosscut these axes of difference. Basarwa share the difficulties and dilemmas faced daily by many rural dwellers regardless of their background, such as gaining access to services and employment, dealing with socio-economic change, and now increasingly coping with the widespread and tragic consequences of the AIDS pandemic. '[W]e have passed beyond the phase of esoterica and can now concentrate on the common... it is in the ordinary that people share their lives', notes Wilmsen (1999:xi-xii) of the discipline of anthropology. Rather than taking a focus on commonalities as marking the end of an era of Basarwa ethnography, as Wilmsen implies elsewhere (1989b:xii), I stress such commonalities as a means of countering the exoticising tendencies of anthropology to which Basarwa have been so subject.

Structure of the thesis

The seven remaining chapters of the thesis fall into three main parts. The first part (Chapters Two and Three) details the changing regimes of power in the northern sandveld, particularly with respect to land. The second part (Chapters Four, Five and Six) is about 'life'; the bread-and-butter issues of securing a livelihood, as well as the narratives of ethnicity, and counter narratives of identity, in which these strategies are embedded. The third part (Chapters Seven and Eight) focuses on the current dynamics of CBNRM in the northern sandveld.

Part I: Land and power. As the northern sandveld has been all but invisible in writings on the region, save the accounts of some early travellers, *Chapter Two* provides in part this missing history. It focuses on the entrenchment of inequality between Basarwa and their neighbours through successive colonial encounters. *Chapter Three* continues to provide the missing histories, but on a more localised level for Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa. The common thread in this chapter is the regimes over land in the northern sandveld, from the immigration of non-Basarwa into the northern sandveld through the creation of national parks, thus setting the stage for the introduction of CBNRM. I argue that, with the exception of CBNRM - which appears to promise the opposite - these changes have progressively alienated Basarwa from control over the land on which they reside. By tracing the fundamental transformations in people's relationships to place and political power, and the manner in which these are represented in the social memories of the present, I provide a context for the contemporary dynamics mapped in the following chapters.

Part II: Life. This section is based on the premise that the contestation between Basarwa and conventionally powerful others, particularly various arms of the state, is both a struggle over control of land and natural resources, as well as one over representation and the meanings attached to resources. I start in *Chapter Four* with the anthropological lens focused on the various powerful institutions in the northern sandveld, particularly those of the state and the tourist industry, and the forms of power they use to attempt to dominate the lives of Basarwa. *Chapter Five,* on livelihoods, explores the strategies by which residents of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa pursue their livelihoods, which includes a complex mix of foraging, waged employment and livestock. *Chapter Six* explores the means by which Basarwa use representations of their identity to legitimate claims to resources and practices important for 'life', particularly rights to land and wildlife.

Part III: Development. The central themes of life, land and power are brought together in this final section on the specifics of development in the northern sandveld. *Chapter Seven* takes

CBNRM as an arena in which various visions of what 'development' should entail are contested, particularly between Basarwa and the state, although also in debates between Basarwa themselves. I argue that in practice CBNRM functions to extend state power, while locally it is appropriated as an opportunity to address land rights. In the concluding chapter, *Chapter Eight*, I examine the applied, methodological and analytical issues raised through the ethnography, and I consider the ways in which CBNRM could function better to meet some of the overlapping goals of the different stakeholders involved.

Anthropology as a discipline has been largely responsible for creating the primitive 'other' as an object of study (Kuper 1988), and the Bushmen have proved an ideal trope. Yet I have chosen to use the perspectives and methods of anthropology: a focus on culture and meaning; a stress on local perceptions and knowledge; the patterns of everyday life; and methodological holism. I believe that this approach can do best justice to the vast challenge of claiming to be able to represent in some way the lives, thoughts, aspirations of people who see their label 'Basarwa' as not only indicative of ways of life that they hold important, but also an intimate part of their struggle for livelihoods, resources and dignity.

PART I

LAND AND POWER

Chapter Two

Authority and inequality

Whether or not Basarwa are aware that popular histories of Ngamiland – oral and written – tend to be the stories of the politically powerful, they are faced daily with the reality that official policies and programmes that affect them take little cognisance of their specific historical experience. As the undisputed first people[8] of Ngamiland, this is an historical experience that Basarwa often refer to with passion in discussions of their present situation. This and the following chapter dwell on history in the northern sandveld – in terms of both the salient events and processes that have led to present patterns of authority and inequality, as well the means by which such aspects of history are remembered and related. The focus of this chapter is on the evolution of political authority in the northern sandveld as a whole. Chapter Three concentrates more explicitly on land and the specific historical experiences of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa. Together they tell a story of how a category of people once referred to as 'Lords of the desert land' (Guenther 1994) are now engaged in a struggle to regain authority over the land on which they live.

The aim of this chapter is in part to provide a basic history of the northern sandveld of Ngamiland, which has as yet received but passing mention - at best - in the annals of historians. It also addresses some of the questions of the so-called 'Kalahari Debate',

[8] I use the term 'first people' rather than 'indigenous', as 'first people' is a category that has local resonance in the northern sandveld as in many parts of Bantu-speaking Africa (cf. Woodburn 1997, Suzman 2000:98), whereas the category 'indigenous' has proved to be politically contentious in Botswana and many other African countries (Saugestad 1998, 2000).

especially the history of Basarwa interaction with other groups through history, and evolution of their 'ethnicity'. Above all, however, this account of the history of the northern sandveld is an attempt at opening up the historical dimension of the contestation for control over land and political authority. It is an exploration of the genesis of present-day narratives and practices of sameness and difference, and how networks of power have been created in which ethnicity has become a key element in defining access to these networks. Furthermore, this chapter provides a background for understanding the way history informs, and is referred to today, in struggles over land.

Following the rise of the Batawana chiefdom in Ngamiland, I outline how at first the various Bantu-speaking groups that migrated into Ngamiland initially interacted with Basarwa on relatively equal terms. It was not until the beginning of the trade boom in 1850 that Batawana were able to build their political authority, which they did primarily through two institutions: *kgamelo*, a system of incorporating sub-tribes into their extending political structures; and *botlhanka*, enforced servitude. An ethnic hierarchy was thus created, in which Basarwa were kept at the bottom, due to their liminality as 'people of the bush'. I suggest that violence, particularly against Basarwa, was necessary to maintain these systems, as Batawana were so heavily outnumbered by the subject tribes they sought to dominate. Some relief from the excesses of violent coercion, however, came with the local presence of colonial authority from 1894. Basarwa were also quick to resist domination, and responses ranged from outright defiance to moving beyond the reach of their oppressors. Although the prevalence of enforced servitude declined through the twentieth century, it endures in the collective memory of all Basarwa in the northern sandveld, and in the personal experiences of many of the older men and women. It is thus a history that colours the interpretations of contemporary processes, and often gives rise to accusations against the government or their non-Basarwa neighbours of unequal treatment.

History, ideology and memory

The history of Basarwa has been at the forefront of much academic writing on the people of the Kalahari, particularly since the 'Kalahari Debate' exploded through the pages of *Current Anthropology* in 1990 (Wilmsen and Denbow 1990, Lee 1990, etc.). The key contributions of revisionists have been twofold: firstly to put to death once and for all the myth of the primitive isolate (e.g. Wilmsen 1989b, Wilmsen and Denbow 1990); and secondly to shift some of the focus to colonisers' images of Bushmen, and the consequences for Basarwa of being categorised as hunter-gatherers (e.g. Gordon 1992). My intention here is not to entrench the debate as to whether Basarwa are survivors or creations of history, but to build upon the

lessons learnt from this scholarship to develop an understanding of how historical processes have shaped present configurations of power, ethnicity and identity.

The Kalahari Debate became one over not only the history of Basarwa *per se*, but also the ideological implications of our theories of their history. Revisionists accused previous scholars of denying Basarwa history by attributing a timeless stone-age past to them by recreating them in our fantasy of a pristine hunting and gathering past. In turn, revisionists faced the counter-accusation of denying Basarwa history by recreating them as an underclass formed by the ubiquitous power of world capital (Lee 1992). While both arguments have some validity, they underlie the contention by Kuper (1993:66) that the controversy has been less about ethnographic observations, and more about their interpretation and salience for theoretical issues in academia. In other words, the debate itself has been more about 'us' than it has been about 'them'. Such versions of Basarwa history have, despite their claims, the same shortcomings as much other historical research in Botswana, characterised by Morton (1994:219) as '*kgotla* research'. The *kgotla* is the focal space for political and judicial activities in Batswana villages, a space from which, until the post-independence era, subject peoples such as Basarwa were excluded, and literally the space in which much of the existing historical research has been done. Predominant forms of historiography have therefore given little cognisance to what Basarwa themselves say of their own history.

Without uncritically using oral histories as unmediated fact, the challenge in moving to a more 'Basarwa-centred' historiography is to draw out some of the ways that history itself is understood, related and used in present contexts. Understanding these historical processes gives a grounding for examining present patterns of subjective, culturally configured action (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). Shared images of the historical past are kinds of memories that have particular importance for the constitution of social groups in the present (Fentress and Wickham 1992). But this is a dialectical process; the present is imprinted onto the past just as the past is imprinted onto the present. History is, of course, told in the light of the present. What is told, how it is told, and why it is told all tell of present priorities and relationships. The present therefore cannot be talked about without reference to the past, and vice versa. This chapter is thus a narrative about both the past and the present, a dialectical approach that informs the thesis as a whole.

The task of 'retelling' a subaltern history of the northern sandveld is dogged by the scarcity of sources. There are no written, and minimal oral, accounts referring to events prior to 1700, leaving only the evidence of a scanty archaeological record. Starting with Livingstone's visit

in 1849, traders, hunters and missionaries to Ngamiland commented, among other things, on their encounters with Basarwa. Apart from a general concern with slavery, Basarwa remained largely invisible to the colonial officers who were stationed in Ngamiland from 1894. Through these records, the voices of Basarwa themselves are, needless to say, virtually silent. Nonetheless, my concern here is as much about present understandings of past social realities, as about historical representations of the same realities. As Isaacsman (1990:120) concluded in a comprehensive study of scholarship on peasant resistance in Africa: 'While there is not a perfect correspondence between what peasants thought, or even what they think they thought, and the social realities in which they lived, their understanding of this reality is as important as the structures of oppression that limited their choices and constrained their actions'.

Ethnicity and inequality

In setting out to understand the evolution of ethnicity and inequality in the northern sandveld, it is necessary to move away from the idea of a pre-given world of separate and discrete 'peoples and cultures' that has been so characteristic of Basarwa studies. By seeing, instead, a difference-producing set of relations we turn from a project of juxtaposing pre-existing differences to one of exploring the construction of differences in historical process (cf. Gupta and Ferguson 1992:16). Acknowledging the centrality of relations of unequal power in creating present day cultural systems and the linkages between them, leads to an understanding of ethnicity as *a product of historical processes which structure relations of inequality between discrete social entities* (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:49-68).

In an African context, the trajectory for much contemporary scholarship of ethnicity was set by two prominent volumes that emphasised the creation and transformation of ethnic identities: Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* (1983); and Vail's *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (1989). They presented pre-colonial Africa as characterised by pluralism, flexible and multiple identities, mobility, overlapping networks, and the context dependent drawing of boundaries, which were rigidified into invented 'traditions' through the colonial process. The only major work on the evolution of Sesarwa ethnicity, Wilmsen's 1989(b) revisionist polemic, *Land Filled with Flies,* is also broadly constructionist. He reworks a neo-Marxist analysis to emphasise the role of capital in the creation of Sesarwa ethnicity in western Ngamiland, arguing that Sesarwa ethnicity is a product of capitalist labour market segmentation; a means to relegate stigmatised people to lower levels of the labour pool.

While these works benefit from a political-economy perspective, their form of constructionism lends itself to two particular criticisms. The first is the assumption that (with reference to Wilmsen) ascribing an ethnic identity to Basarwa was contingent on their first being an underclass in an integrated political economy. However, this begs the question of how these categories came into being in the first place, and where the stigma that became attached to Basarwa originated. I suggest (as Suzman (1997:22) has done for relations between Ju/'hoansi and Herero in Omaheke Namibia) that the emergent structures of authority built upon a *pre-existing* consciousness in the northern sandveld that defined Basarwa as fundamentally different from their neighbours. These pre-existing categorisations determined the manner in which Basarwa came to participate in the emerging political economy of Ngamiland. The second, and related, criticism of revisionist analyses of ethnicity is that they privilege the power of colonial decrees and ideologies, at the expense of agency. The people they argue came to wear the mantle of these ethnicities are presented as passive in this process, or at best reactionary. Such a view posits ethnic identities as empty vessels within which the powerful place conventional, but arbitrary, oppositions between categories. In a subsequent re-evaluation of his earlier work, Ranger (1993:107) concluded that state intervention is surpassed, transformed, and often thwarted, by the imagination of local actors. He also discarded his use of the word 'invention', with its implication of a one-sided flow of power, for Anderson's (1983) 'imagined', which opens the way to uncovering the processes of negotiation, contestation, and creativity that take place in defining ethnicity. I now turn to examining these processes in the northern sandveld of Ngamiland.

Prehistory

The archaeological record sheds little light on the nature of prehistoric societies in the northern sandveld. The scarcity of naturally occurring durable materials means that there are few visible remains of material culture. Furthermore, the constantly changing topography of both the Okavango Delta and the sand mantle to the north of it make it even more difficult to trace the few remains there may be. Nonetheless, isolated surface remains can be found near some pans and lagoons, mainly in the form of Stone Age implements and more recent pottery shards. An early Late Stone Age ovate scraper found during fieldwork at Khurumadzanga, on the southeastern side of the Mababe Depression, was estimated to be from c.1000 BC (Alec Campbell, pers. comm.), indicating a long history of human habitation. The sole hills in the area, at Gubatshaa and Gcoha on the northern edge of the Mababe Depression (Map 1.2), have a handful of rock paintings, which have as yet not been dated. Their style indicates connections with Tsodilo to the west and Matopos (in western Zimbabwe) to the east, and that

human settlement at the hills was probably intermittent through the centuries (Campbell 1970).

The only archaeological work undertaken on the northern fringe of the delta so far has been by Wilmsen and Denbow at Xugana, and more recently an ethno-archaeological project by begun by Damm et al. (1998) west of Khwai. The ethno-archaeological research used oral histories to identify previous settlements of Khwai residents, thus focusing on more recent remains. Although this gave an indication of the type of topography favoured for settlement,[9] attempts to locate older sites have so far proved fruitless. Denbow and Wilmsen's (1986, Denbow 1990) excavation at Xugana yielded evidence of Early Iron Age inhabitants up to c.1000AD, who had no stock, although sites on the southeastern edge of the Delta (Lotshitshi) gave evidence of stock by 300AD. Despite the difficulties of estimating the identities and relationships of these early inhabitants from the archaeological record alone, Wilmsen (1995a:312) concludes from his extensive excavations in Ngamiland that there is 'circumstantial' evidence that Khoisan speakers constituted the higher-status economic and political groups in the Kalahari up to 600AD. By 1000AD, these were overtaken by established hierarchical social formations along the eastern fringes of the Kalahari that were dominated by Bantu-speaking agropastoral metallurgists. However, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century, after the arrival of Batawana in Ngamiland, that the western Kalahari, including the Okavango, was absorbed into these polities (ibid.).

Turning to linguistic evidence, Vossen (1984, 1990) uses lexicostatistical analysis to postulate on the historical relationships between the central Khoisan category of languages (Khwe-speakers). These are spoken today by Basarwa across central and northern Botswana, as well as northern Namibia. He constructs the relationships represented in Figure 2.1, derived from a hypothetical Proto-Khwe root. Vossen theorises a split about 2,000 years ago between Khoekhoe and other Khwe-speakers. This was followed by further splits into Kxoe, Shua, Nharo and //Gana. These four then split further to include the nine shown in Figure 2.1. It is difficult to estimate the periods of these further splits, as they were probably successive within each sub-category rather than happening at the same time. Bugakhwedam (spoken mostly in Khwai and Gudigwa) and Ts'exadam (spoken in Mababe) are shown in bold. Although Khwai and Mababe are less than forty kilometres apart, their languages – being in separate sub-groups – do not have a high affinity. Khwai today represents the eastern extent

[9] This archaeological research, confirmed by oral history, indicates that settlements were most often built on ridges of sand set back from a waterhole or lagoon. This gave access to the water and the animals utilising it, but avoided the risks of flooding on the clay soils closer to the water, or of scaring the animals away.

of Northern Khwe languages, while Mababe represents the western extent of Central Khwe languages.

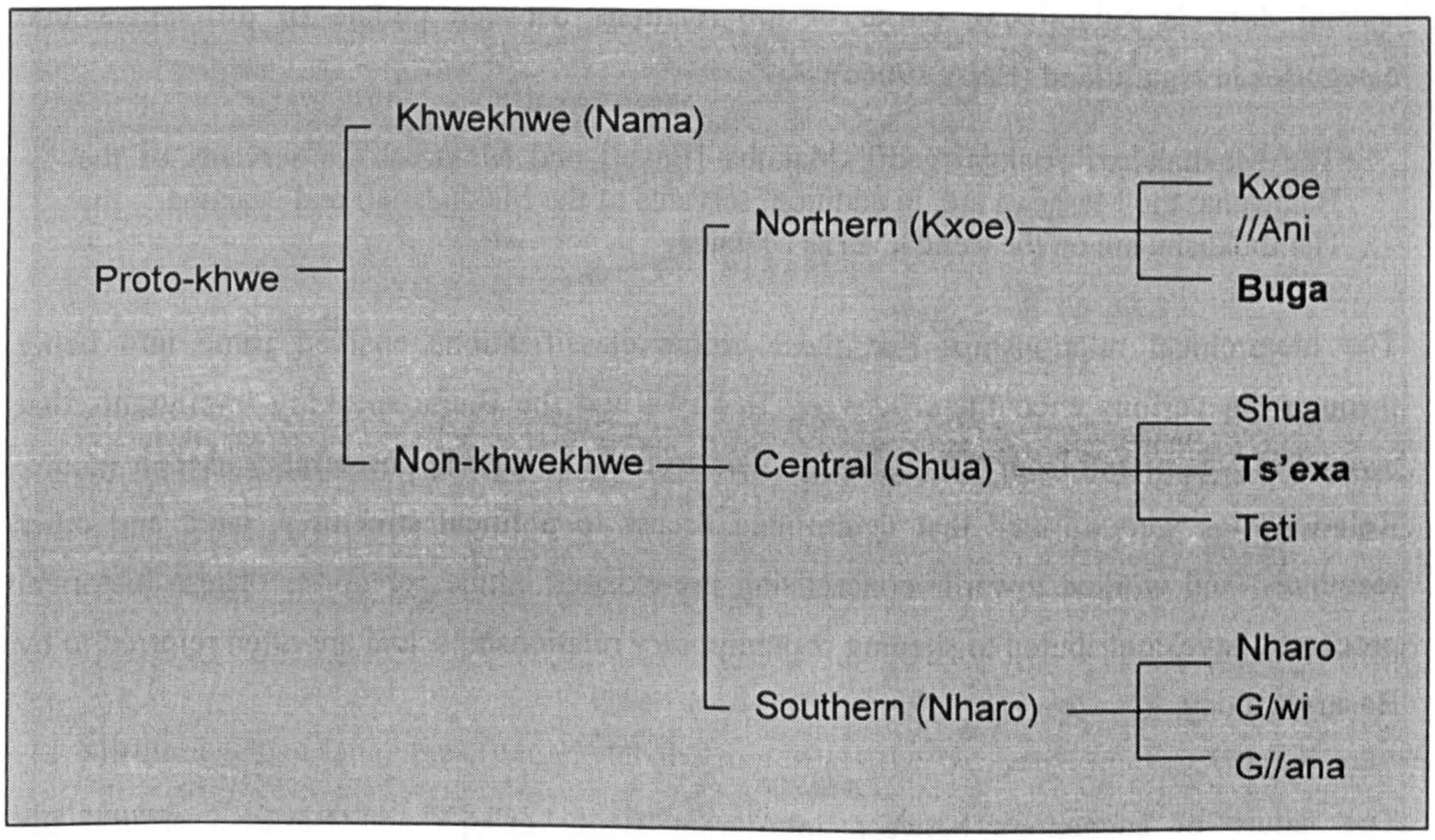

Figure 2.1: Linguistic relationships of Khwe languages (after Vossen 1984).

It is unlikely that in prehistoric times Basarwa regarded themselves as the same people. A sense of affinity probably arose later through the common experience of domination by agro-pastoralists. One division at this time was probably between those that lived along the rivers, mostly //Anikhwe (lit. ***//Ani*** – river, ***khwe*** – person), and those that lived in the sandveld, such as Bugakhwe (lit. ***Boga*** – dry country, ***khwe*** – person in //Anikhwedam), a division of ecological niches that probably predated the arrival of Bayei. Confirming contemporary oral narratives, a Moyei informant told Stigand (1923) that the only people his ancestors encountered when they arrived was 'the Bushmen on the sandveld, and the River Bushmen on the rivers'. Little linguistic research has been done with Shiyei, but a cursory analysis suggests a high degree of borrowing from northern-Khwe languages. Apart from borrowed words,[10] Shiyei is the only non-Khoisan language in Botswana to have borrowed and maintained extensive use of clicks.

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[10]To take a few examples:

	Shiyei	**Bugakhwedam**
Well	*she//gana*	***//gana***
Riverbed	*modom*	***dom***
One	*/iki*	***/wi***

Different historical encounters

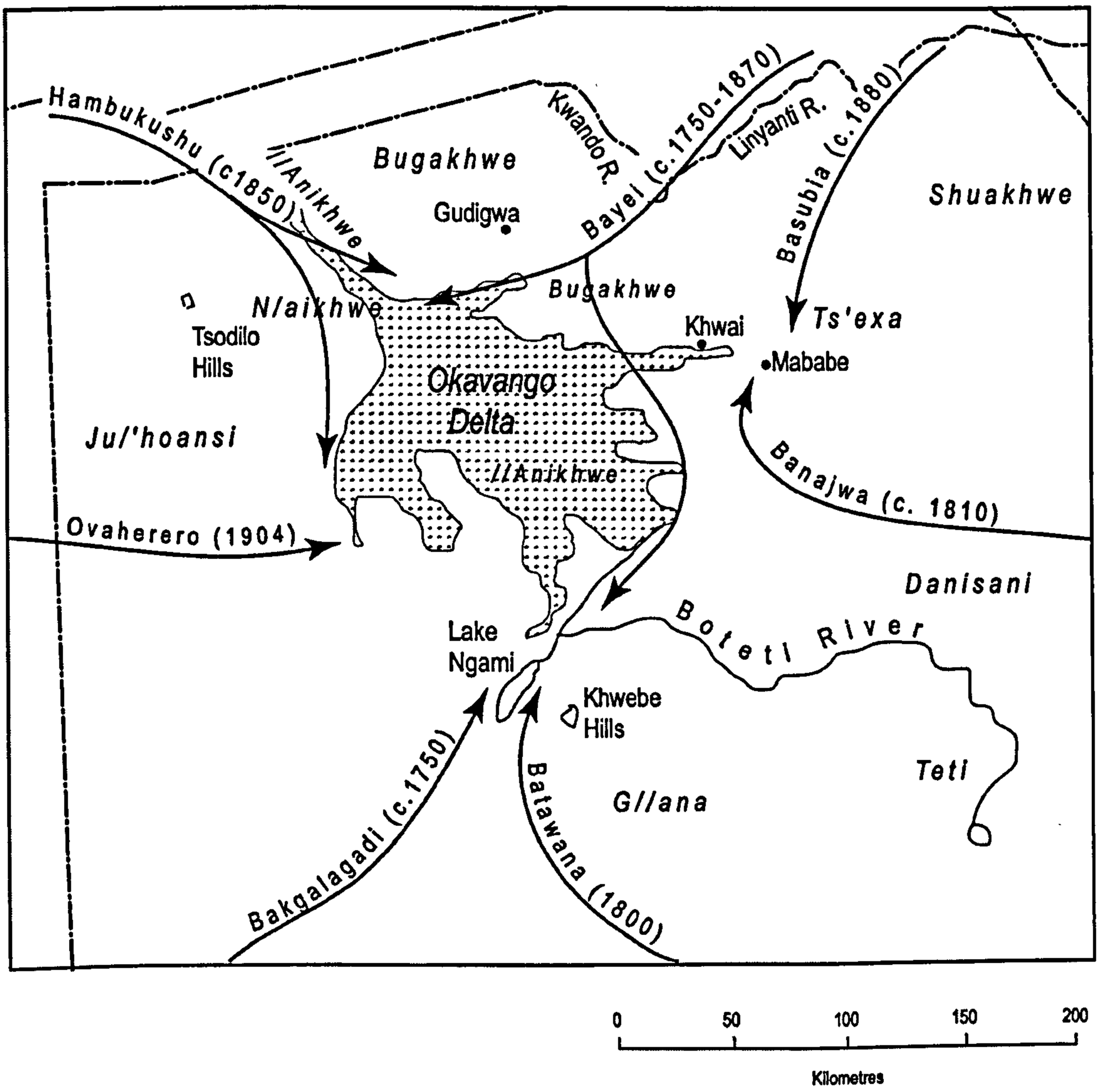
In 1906, Jules Ellenberger, Assistant Commissioner for Southern District, who was then on special duty in Ngamiland, wrote of the relations between people of different ethnic categories in Ngamiland (BNA 1906c):

> The Makhalahari [Bakgalagadi], Makuba [Bayei] and Masarwa are servants of the Batawana: the Masarwa are, in addition, servants of the Makhalahari and Makuba... the Hambukushu are on the same level as Makuba.

The hierarchical relationships that these ethnic classifications enabled came into being through the various encounters between Basarwa and the Bantu-speaking immigrants that arrived in Ngamiland from the eighteenth century, which varied considerably in their nature. Relationships were formed that determined access to political structures, land, and other resources, and worked towards concretising pre-existent ethnic categories. These historical processes have contributed to shaping contemporary relationships, and are often referred to by Basarwa today.

The nature of encounters between immigrant Bantu groups and Basarwa around the Okavango Delta provides an interesting context in which to examine the development of ethnic hierarchies. The encounters between the ancestors of those presently inhabiting Ngamiland were relatively recent, having only begun in about 1700, and so are still spoken of. There were also several different layers of immigration, each prompting different forms of relationships with the people who they found in the land. The first non-Basarwa immigrants in historical times were Bayei and Bakgalagadi, who trickled into Ngamiland in the first half of the eighteenth century. They were followed at the end of the eighteenth century by Batawana, an offshoot of one of the powerful southern Batswana chiefdoms. Throughout the nineteenth century, various other Hambukushu, Basubia, Gcereku, and Banajwa groups moved into the northern fringes of the Delta, many of them arriving as refugees from wars or fleeing their own despotic leaders (Map 2.1). Three main historical phases in socio-political relationships may be identified through all these immigrations:

- 1700-1840, a period of relative equality between the various people that had populated Ngamiland.
- 1840-1906, marked by the strengthening of the Batawana chiefdom and the development of strong social hierarchies.
- 1906-1966, the colonial presence in Ngamiland in 1906, which introduced new structures that both strengthened and weakened the existing patterns of authority.



Map 2.1: Early settlement and immigration into Ngamiland (italicised labels for Khoisan speakers, regular for Bantu-speakers. Positions of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa are present-day).

Relative equality (1700-1840)

By the mid-eighteenth century Bayei were spread throughout the Delta, having migrated from the north using waterways as their main arteries of travel (Tlou 1985:12-14). They were not politically or militarily organised, and did not subdue the various Basarwa groups who they found in and around the Okavango. Their lack of military prowess was often commented upon by early travellers and missionaries, with Livingstone (1857:56) characterising them as

'Quakers of the body politic in Africa'. In contrast to the encounters between Khoisan and Bantu-speakers elsewhere, Bayei and Basarwa interacted on terms that were generally equal and amicable. This was particularly so with the ancestors of Basarwa who today call themselves //Anikhwe, who - in common with Bayei - lived along the waterways and islands of the delta. Early travellers commented on the close association and similarity in the lifestyles of //Anikhwe and Bayei (e.g. Passarge 1997[1905]:236), so close in fact that some travellers and administrators even confused Bayei as a Bushman subgroup, especially those that lived south of the Mababe Depression (e.g. Livingstone 1852, Dornan 1925:81, BNA 1962b). Stories of origin in the northern sandveld also tell of an initial relationship of equality and mutual co-operation between Basarwa and Bayei (see the story of Khara/'uma, Chapter Six). In most such stories told by Basarwa elsewhere, the separation between Basarwa hunter-gatherers and Bantu-speaking agro-pastoralists is spoken of as being due to the strength and trickery of Bantu-speakers. In the northern sandveld, however, Basarwa instead speak of a relationship of mutual co-operation between Khara/'uma, the first Mosarwa, and the first Moyei. Furthermore, many Bayei refer to Basarwa in a generic sense as their 'uncles' (mothers' brothers) as an acknowledgement not only of Basarwa being 'first people', but also of many Bayei having Basarwa ancestors.

Whereas most Bantu-speakers took Basarwa women whose subsequent offspring were then raised as their own, intermarriage took place in both directions between Bayei and Basarwa, with Basarwa men taking Bayei wives and vice-versa. The taking of non-Basarwa women by Basarwa men has not been common, but those examples documented have all involved (usually sedentary) Khwe-speaking Basarwa: between Kxoe and Ovambo in northern Namibia (Gordon 1992;214); between Zama and Sekele/Mbukushu/Guangares/Mbuela in Angola (Almeida 1965); and between Kxoe and Mbukushu/Mbwela (Köhler 1989:395ff, 427ff, Gertrud Boden pers. comm.). Such relationships continue - four men in Mababe, for example, are married to Bayei women. Following the predominant pattern of patrilocal residence, children from such relationships have usually been brought up in the father's social milieu, therefore regarding themselves as Basarwa.

Such intermarriage is the explanation that residents of northern Ngamiland give as to the origins of 'black' Basarwa, which has puzzled researchers intent on categorising and explaining the physiology of the people of southern Africa. Some early explorers (eg. Selous 1893:106, Passarge 1997 [1905]) also pointed to intermarriage in explaining why Khwe-speaking Basarwa in Ngamiland had Bantu physiological characteristics, as did early scholars (Schapera 1930, Bleek and Dugan-Cronin 1942), and colonial administrators (e.g. BNA

1906a, Clark 1951). Nonetheless, others came to different conclusions. Livingstone (1857:68) assumed their 'deepest hue' was a product of heat and moisture. Other explorers, as well as more recently scholars, have suggested that they originated from pastoral people who lost their livestock and adopted the languages and subsistence strategies of neighbouring hunter-gatherers (e.g. Seiner 1977[1910], Dornan 1917:42, Cashdan 1979, Campbell 1990:124, Nurse and Jenkins 1977, Nurse et al 1985). Nurse and Jenkins' conclusions were based partly on serogenetic studies that indicated that at least some 'black' Basarwa had no more Khoisan admixture than many Bantu-speaking people. However, if their own narratives are to be believed, this only underlies the contention by some Basarwa that 'the whole of Botswana is descended from Basarwa'.

The next group of immigrants to arrive in Ngamiland was the Setswana-speaking Batawana, who eventually formed, despite their low numbers, a powerful and centralised polity. The rise of Batawana hegemony in Ngamiland is well documented, and within Botswana is often regarded as *the* history of Ngamiland (see, for example, Tlou 1985). Their arrival was a result of the falling-out of the two sons of Ngwato, chief of Bangwato at Shoshong. Khama, the heir, remained, and his younger brother Tawana (after whom they took their name) left with his followers. They moved with all their possessions and cattle, arriving at the Kgwebe Hills (near the southwestern edge of the Okavango Delta) in about 1800. Moving to avoid conflict was a common strategy for Setswana-speaking groups, spawning the umbrella name by which they would become known; *Batswana*, explained as 'those that cannot hold themselves together' (Brown 1926). The southern side of the Delta was possibly already claimed by Bakwena[11] as their land (Tlou 1985:41), but if this was so, it is likely that their hold was tenuous at best, it being used as an occasional hunting area. Although the Batawana arrived with a practised army, it was small, and their refugee status made them cautious in their dealings with the people they encountered in this new land. Speaking of when Bangwato were in a similar position, the Bangwato chief Tshekedi Khama, told a 1935 enquiry into slavery (London Missionary Society 1935) that:

> There was in those times no question of overlordship of one people over another. It was simply a mutual understanding: at that time we had no strength by which we could force them to become our servants.

The first four decades in Ngamiland were difficult for Batawana. They were attacked by Bangwato in 1810, faced internal power struggles, and then in about 1826 were attacked by

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[11] The Bakwena are another Batswana tribe, off which Bangwato were an offshoot.

Sebetwane and his Makololo troops, who left a swathe of destruction as they moved up from the south. They fled to the northern side of the Delta, but many were taken captive by the Makololo, in whose servitude they remained for a number of years. Not only were Batawana unable, as Tshekedi attested of Bangwato, to subjugate the populations they found there, but they also had to rely on the knowledge and goodwill of these populations for their survival. During this time, many Batawana escaped servitude by fleeing to isolated villages of Bayei (Tlou 1985:43), and, no-doubt, Basarwa. Due to all their cattle being taken by the Bakololo invaders, they also probably subsisted largely on hunting and gathering wild food. Other Bantu-speaking refugees survived in a similar manner. Livingstone (1857:69) met Basubia on the southeast edge of the Mababe Depression, when he passed through in 1850, who he noted had lost sorghum and were reliant on wild plants. It was not uncommon in similar contexts throughout southern Africa, for impoverished Bantu-speakers to survive for a time by foraging with Bushmen (see the examples noted by Wilmsen 1989b:84-5). At this time, Batawana wielded no control over significant areas of land. Wilmsen (1989b:75), for example, argues that by calling Kgwebe after a Mosarwa,[12] they initially recognised the prior right of possession by Basarwa, a pattern attested to by the fact that 48 percent of place names in Ngamiland today are of Sesarwa origin (Peters 1972:225).

The rise of inequality (1840-1906)

It was not until 1840 that the Batawana state was re-established by gathering together the dispersed Batawana refugees and rebuilding their capital at Toteng. The balance of power between Batawana and their neighbours now began to shift. As refugees many of them had survived on the goodwill and knowledge of Basarwa, Bayei and Basubia. Now that they formed a centralised power, they again looked to their neighbours, but this time to restock their herds that had been decimated through raiding. Early writers note that it was the cattle wealth of Bayei and Bakgalagadi that laid the foundation for the large herds that Batawana then built up (Andersson 1856, Nettleton 1934:355). Batawana had been used to appropriating the labour and resources of tribes that they subjugated before they had split from Bangwato. Once they were in a position to do so in Ngamiland, they took the opportunity. Ethnic stereotyping reflecting differential power relationships started becoming more pronounced, and it was in this period that Batawana started calling Bayei *Makoba* (Sutherland 1984:64), a term synonymous with servant/slave.[13]

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[12] Some informants maintain that Kgwebe was a Mokgalagadi, not a Mosarwa.

[13] Informants today claim that this name originated from the practice of using Bayei as carriers. While the Motawana rode his horse, he would shout '*Koba, koba*' (a term meaning to chase with contempt) to his carriers. Despite its pejorative origins, many Bayei still refer to themselves by this term.

Plate 2.1: Tshaathoboga, on the southeastern side of the Mababe Depression.

Plate 2.2: Woodland of the northern Delta fringe.

The political power of the Batawana expanded considerably under Letsholathebe I, who ruled from 1847-1874. He divided his state into provinces, each of which was overseen by a *molebeleedi* (overseer), who was responsible for extracting tribute from the people in his area, and carrying out the chief's orders in it. This system, known as *kgamelo* (milk jug) overlapped rather than destroyed the existing political structures. It had already been used to consolidate dominance over subject peoples by other Setswana-speakers; the Bangwato chieftaincy in the 1820s, and Bakwena in the 1830s. Some subject people were also integrated more directly into the Batawana economy through becoming herders and servants. Thus the strongly hierarchical and centralised social organisation of the Batawana began to make itself felt in Ngamiland. Initially the extent of the Batawana state was fairly small, and it was not until the reign of Moremi II (1876-1890) that the land north and east of the Delta was claimed as the chief's hunting grounds.

Wilmsen (1989b:101) argues that it was the institution of *kgamelo* that served to absorb those Basarwa that owned stock into the Tawana polity, and create a class of those that did not; who then, through the rise and fall of mercantile capitalism, became 'Bushmen'. He paints a vivid picture of the penetration and omnipresence of mercantile capital in Ngamiland, in which 'the entire region had pulsed with activity; everybody had had a piece of the everyday action' (ibid:127). The boom, which began with Livingstone and Oswell's visit to the Batawana capital in 1849, and lasted until 1890, was dominated by Batawana, who used the trade to become rich in commodities such as guns and horses. As Wilmsen shows, this was action in which Basarwa were pivotal, not only as guides to white hunters, but also as hunters for the Batawana chieftaincy, and for trade in their own right. Wilmsen represents the collapse of the mercantile economy, coinciding with the devastating rinderpest epizootic of 1897 - that decimated both wildlife and cattle populations - as the beginning of the end for Basarwa. The subsequent cattle economy needed far fewer herders drawn from their ranks than the trade economy needed hunters. In this manner, Wilmsen suggested, was a foraging underclass created; a relation of production that had been open to negotiation became the ethnic category of Basarwa.

As convincing as Wilmsen's account may appear, to make the rise and fall of mercantile capital the primary explanatory factor in the creation of Sesarwa ethnicity verges on reductionism. It ignores the pre-existing conceptual separation by Batswana of Basarwa as 'people of the bush', as opposed to Batswana pastoralists who lived in villages. It is also unable to explain persistence of distinct ways of living that separated Basarwa from their Bantu-speaking neighbours, despite their long history of close contact. Early visitors to the

northern sandveld noted that that Basarwa often lived in close proximity with Bantu-speakers, yet retained their distinctiveness (e.g. Livingstone 1857:69 and Selous 1893:141-3 for Mababe, Gibbons 1904:202 for Gabamukuni, and Hurwitz 1956 for the east bank of the Okavango River). Yet hunting and gathering was a lifestyle that Basarwa chose and maintained in spite of sustained contact with agro-pastoralists, perhaps because this social and economic niche they occupied remained to their advantage (cf. Barth 1994:18).

An important factor in considering both *kgamelo* and servitude is one that has, as yet, been under-appreciated by historians; the extent to which Batawana were a numerical minority in Ngamiland. Tlou (1985:54) assumes that Batawana were numerically the second largest ethnic group in Ngamiland. Wilmsen (1997:225) agrees, quoting an early estimation of 5000 men as the size of the Batawana army. This figure, given by Schulz and Hammar (1897:313-314), does not explicitly exclude members from subject tribes, which by the late nineteenth century comprised a significant portion of the Batawana army (Tlou 1971:201-202). Compare this figure with other early estimates; Baines (1864:432-3) estimated 500 fighting men, and Schinz (in Morton 1993:92) estimated in 1887 that Batawana comprised 500-700 of a *morafe* (polity) of 10,000. Lt. Scolefield (BNA 1897), commander of the police troop in Ngamiland, estimated Batawana to be outnumbered by their subject population in 1897 by 25:1. Passarge (1997 [1905]:225) reproduces the estimate of a local merchant from the same period that there were 300 adult fighting Batawana men. The paucity of Batawana as a proportion of the total population of Ngamiland made the institutions of *kgamelo* and slavery especially crucial in building and maintaining Batawana hegemony in Ngamiland.

Kgamelo

Following the pattern of other Batswana tribes, the Batawana chieftaincy created a system of political authority that was spatially represented in their organisation of settlement and land use. The seat of political power, the *kgotla*, was at the centre of the village, and was where the chief resided. The village itself was then divided into different wards, each of which had a head appointed by the chief. The ward heads were not only responsible for their wards in the metropole, but were also designated *balebeleedi* (overseers) of districts elsewhere in the land claimed by Batawana.[14] *Kgamelo* operated on the principle of accepting the allegiance of

[14] Dikgoti, became the *molebeleedi* for the area that covered Khwai and Mababe, a job his son Motsewakhumo took over at the end of the nineteenth century. Monihe was the *molebeleedi* for the scattered villages along the northern arm of the Delta. Between them, they exacted tribute from the Basarwa of the northern sandveld. Motsewakhumo collected this himself, while Monihe did so from the ancestors of the Basarwa who now live in Gudigwa through Samushondo, an Mbukushu intermediary in Gunitsoga.

other non-Batawana groups so as to expand the political authority of the Batawana chiefdom (Wilmsen 1989b:98). Some of these were initially other Batswana groups, but probably the first non-Setswana-speaking people to be incorporated were Bakgalagadi (Nettleton 1934:345, Schapera 1952:93ff), some of whom accompanied Tawana when he broke away from Ngwato, and others of whom already lived at Kgwebe with Basarwa when the Batawana arrived around 1800. Bakgalagadi thus came to occupy a relatively privileged position in the Batawana chieftaincy, a necessity born of the paucity of Batawana numbers. The Bakgalagadi already owned some stock, and spoke a language not too dissimilar from Setswana. Several Bakgalagadi wards were created in the Batawana capital, with Bakgalagadi *balebeeledi,* who were given their own territories to oversee.

One such *molebeleedi* was Morubela, a Mophareng (Mokgalagadi), who was given oversight of the Qangwa area in western Ngamiland. Ju/'hoansi still speak of the atrocities he committed to force them into servitude, including tying up non-adherents in bundles of grass, and setting them alight (M. Taylor 1998:354). Morubela is often spoken of today as being a Motawana, rather than Mokgalagadi, an example not only of how some Bakgalagadi were permitted to become almost political and social equals of Batawana, but also of how having social and political power became conflated with being Motawana. Such extreme methods of coercion, although widespread in Ngamiland and elsewhere (Morton 1994:226), were not as prevalent in Khwai and Mababe, which remained a hinterland to most non-Basarwa. Motsewaboloi, the widow of the late headman of Khwai, explained the remoteness of Batawana rule: 'They did oppress us, but it was from afar, so we didn't feel it so badly'.

Rather than carrying the connotations of an ethnic unit that 'tribe' has in Western discourse today, the *kgamelo* system allowed the Batawana tribe to be a political entity that encompassed many different people who gave allegiance to the Batawana chief. The fluidity of ethnic identity in Ngamiland is evidenced by the 1946 census, which showed a disproportionately increasing number of Ngamiland residents (8,124) referring to themselves as Batawana (Table. 2.1). Compare this to the estimates above of 500-1,000 people from only fifty years earlier, and of 1,500 Batawana in the 1921 census (Stigand 1923:412). Yet, this was a selective fluidity. The greater the geographical and social distance from the metropole, the less porous the boundaries were. In both these senses, Basarwa were distant from the centres of power, and were thus generally excluded from the political privilege of 'becoming' Batawana.

Ethnic group	Number
Bayei	13,261
Batawana	**8,124**
Ovaherero	5,798
Hambukushu	5,268
Basarwa	3,704
Bakgalagadi	1,918
Gcereku	1,513
Barotse	744
Banajwa	728
Basubia	486
Ndebele	103
Basotho	42
TOTAL	**41,689**

Table 2.1: Ethnic composition of Ngamiland, according to the 1946 census (after Schapera 1952:94).

The status of being granted your own ward in the capital, as well as a district to oversee, marked a critical juncture between those that were accepted into the Batawana polity as full citizens, and the subject population. Schapera (1952:94ff) recorded forty wards on a visit to Maun, the tribal capital. Over half the population of 7,628 lived in the twenty wards designated as Batswana. Another seven wards were designated Bakgalagadi, seven Basotho, three Ndebele (Kalolo), and three Herero/Mbanderu. Bayei, Hambukushu and Basarwa were denied their own wards, despite undoubtedly comprising the majority of the population of Maun. Instead, they were scattered among each of the wards. Each ward was thus ethnically heterogeneous, but the ethnic label by which the ward was known was taken from select ethnic categories. The power of controlling a section of land, and status as a full member of the tribe (and political and social status this conferred) was thus denied subject tribes. A lower tier of headmen existed in the districts, through which the *balebeleedi* in the metropole operated. Subject tribes were allocated positions in this lowest level of authority, integrating them into the wider political structures of the Batawana chieftaincy. This system meant that Basarwa, who rarely had strong leaders, were kept almost completely to the lowest level in the structures of authority that were set up in the Batawana chiefdom. Schapera (1952:94) does not mention Basarwa among an official list of 134 'sub chiefs and headmen' issued in

1939, but which included Bayei, Hambukushu, Basubia, Gcereku and Najwa. The four tier ethnic hierarchy that *kgamelo* created is represented in tabular form in Table 2.2.

Level 1	Batawana	*Disproportionate political power and representation in the capital's wards*
Level 2	Bakgalagadi, Basotho, Ndebele, Ovaherero	*Limited representation in the capital's wards*
Level 3	Bayei, Hambukushu, Basubia, Gcereku, Najwa	*No representation in the capital's wards, but some headmen in the districts*
Level 4	Basarwa	*No political representation at all, either in the capital or in the districts*

Table 2.2*:* Representation of ethnic hierarchies in Ngamiland through *kgamelo*.

The *kgamelo* system therefore created a system of political power and patronage that depended on the control of land and allocation of resources from it, and conflated access to political power with spatial position and ethnic labelling. Unlike Basarwa, Bakgalagadi were a subject tribe that was able to rise in these structures of power. In 1850, Livingstone had noted Bakgalagadi were 'much oppressed by Batawana' (quoted by Morton 1994:225), as they were in other Setswana-speaking polities (e.g. Wilmsen 1989b:278-9). Nonetheless, by 1950 they had seven wards in the capital. The lowest of the subject tribes had no wards of their own in Maun, while others of disproportionately small numbers (especially Basotho and Ndebele) did. Nevertheless, each of these subject tribes, with the single exception of Basarwa, were represented by sub-chiefs and headmen in their own districts, appointed by the Batawana chief. In this hierarchy of selective porosity, Basarwa were almost completely excluded from attaining formal positions of authority and control over land. There is little

EX BIBL. UNIV. EDIN

evidence that Basarwa themselves attempted to achieve formal positions within these structures. They either accepted them, attempted to maintain their own autonomy by challenging Batawana authority in their own areas, or moved to escape from Batawana authority.

The exclusion of Basarwa was generally comprehensive. Some Bayei were able to rebuild small cattle herds for themselves after the devastation of the rinderpest epizootic in 1897 (Sutherland 1984:71), a form of wealth that gave them social prestige, through which some Bayei even obtained Basarwa serfs. Yet, the few Basarwa in the northern sandveld that were able to gain livestock soon lost them to Bakgalagadi. With some exceptions, Basarwa were also excluded from initiation ceremonies and subsequent age-regiments, a privilege extended to Bayei and other subject tribes. The crucial difference between Basarwa and other subject tribes was the position they occupied in the conceptual universe of Batawana, which excluded them from the realm of civilised humanity. They were people of *naga* ('the bush'; place of animals, nature, wildness – and Bushmen), as opposed to people of the *motse* ('the village'; place of culture, domesticity, civilisation, humanity). '*O a mo nyatsa*' ('One despised/reviled the Mosarwa') an old Motawana man from a family of *balebeleedi* in Maun explained to me. This gave an ideological justification, not only for the exclusion of Basarwa from attaining any position of political authority under the *kgamelo* system, but also for the appropriation of Basarwa labour through enforced servitude.

Enforced servitude

In discussing both their past and their present, Basarwa often refer to their history of enforced servitude, or ***koaa-tsi*** in Bugakhwedam. 'Our ancestors were owned and used like dogs are today', explained Kebuelemang, the headman of Mababe. The Setswana word that Kebuelemang, like many others, used was *go rua*, meaning 'to own' or 'to raise', a word usually used of livestock or other possessions. They were thus dehumanised to the extent of being regarded simply as assets useful for their productive potential. In the words of Uma Sekere, the now deceased mother of the headman of Gudigwa, whose family had 'belonged' to a Bakgalagadi family for at least four generations, 'Anything called *Mosarwa* was made to work'.

The nature of enforced servitude of subject peoples in the various Batswana chiefdoms has been the subject of much debate by both colonial officials and historians. Tlou (1985) distinguishes between clientship, which was a voluntary attachment to a particular household, and enforced serfdom known in Setswana as *botlhanka*, but refrains from categorising any practices as outright slavery. Nonetheless, despite not being involved in the southern Angolan

slave trade, Batawana did trade slaves on occasion, and Ngamiland was known by some Boer traders as a source of slaves between 1850 and 1870 (Morton 1994:229-231). In a letter dated 10th July 1906 (BNA 1906b), Ralph Williams, the Resident Commissioner reported that in the time of the Batawana chiefs Letsholathebe I (1847-1874) and Moremi II (1876-1890), slaves were sold among the Batawana, but Moremi II had stopped it. He went on to say that the position of Basarwa and other subordinate tribes is 'now not slavery in any sense', but they are 'subordinate', a judgement he made in comparison to Portuguese-assisted slavery among Hambukushu at Nyangana, which he regarded as 'real slavery'. He did, however, express his concern to the Crown Prosecutor in Mafeking, who replied (BNA 1907b) that according to his descriptions, slavery, as defined and outlawed by both Roman-Dutch and English law, existed in Ngamiland.

Oral histories (Tlou 1985:56, confirmed by my own) indicate that *botlhanka* had its origins in voluntary assistance with labour, as well as the loaning of children for household chores. Prior to the 1840s in Ngamiland, it could have been little else, as Batawana lacked the political might to enforce it on any significant scale. Tlou (1985) represents Batawana rule in their expanding state as fairly benign: '...the Tawana kingdom was thus multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, each community being allowed some degree of autonomy'. Certainly the vastness of the land they claimed, and the difficulty of traversing large stretches that consisted of either swampland or waterless sandveld, militated against severe coercion. However, the degree to which Batawana were outnumbered by those they were attempting to subjugate promoted the increasing use of terror to coerce subject groups into *botlhanka*, particularly Bayei and Basarwa. Moremi II was reported to have proclaimed in his *kgotla* that, 'We have always killed Makuba [Bayei], and taken their children, and we shall go on doing it. (Hepburn 1896:262). However, historical sources suggest that the most severe forms of violence were aimed at Basarwa. Passarge (1997[1905]:273), for example, noted that 'Bushmen are still caught in great numbers, especially young girls are stolen and used as concubines'. Traders and missionaries who visited Letsholathebe I during his reign (1847-74) unanimously singled him out for his ill treatment of Basarwa. Dornan (1925:66) labelled him 'the greatest offender in ill-usage of Bushmen'. Andersson (1856:437) accused him of 'setting little value on Bushman life', and related an incident of Letsholathebe drowning two Basarwa who failed to look after a horse of his, as well as tying a young Mosarwa accused of sheep stealing to a tree and using him for target practice. Baines (1864:175), who visited the Batawana capital in 1861, accused Letsholathebe of luring a group of Basarwa who had stolen some of his cattle, on the pretext of wanting to trade, and then slitting their throats.

With the increase of *botlhanka* under Letsholathebe, Ngamiland gained the reputation towards the end of the nineteenth century of being the stronghold of *botlhanka* among the Batswana chiefdoms. Although present in all the Batswana chiefdoms, it was the opinion of the resident police chief, Lt. Scolefield, that 'slavery is more prevalent among Batawana than any other Bechuanaland tribe'. In a letter that he wrote to the Resident Commissioner in Mafeking in 1897, he went on to describe his understanding of slavery in Ngamiland (BNA 1897):

> The slave owner has the power of life and death over his slaves and this he has no compunction to use to its full extent. The owner does not attend to his slaves' requirements he does not, probably, he cannot feed them and at such times as these they wander about the country in search of food, stealing stock and as often as they get caught they get shot. Should a native owner discover one of his slaves working for a white master, when impelled by hunger, as often as not they will flog him so unmercifully that the wretched fellow dies.

Local voices also spoke out against treatment of serfs, particularly those that aligned themselves with the church. In a letter dated 14th September 1888 to a Setswana newspaper, *Mahoko a Becwana*, Khukhu Mogodi, an evangelist based in Palapye, catalogued a series of ill-treatments of *batlhanka* by a particular Batawana family, among which he wrote the following (trans. Raditladi 1998):

> ...The elder brother to this man [who tied his maidservant to the tail of a running horse] killed his Mosarwa. The fault with this Mosarwa was that the killer's younger brother married Basarwa prolifically, selecting prettier ones for himself, yet he had a wife from among his own people, at home. This Mosarwa who had been married to this man fell in love with a fellow Mosarwa and both eloped to live in the bush. This man found them and cut off the male Mosarwa's ears and part of the cheeks dangled loose, loaded the gun with gunpowder and shot his private parts and the man died a slow death after lots of anguish.

Severe violence as a means of enforcing servitude was therefore a particular characteristic of the Batawana chiefdom in the second half of the nineteenth century. The use of terror was an integral strategy, alongside institutions such as *kgamelo*, for the numerically very small tribe of Batawana to assert their political authority over subject tribes. Although Basarwa were not the only people subject to serfdom they bore the brunt of violent subjugation, inhuman treatment that was ideologically underpinned by the liminal position Basarwa occupied in the Batawana social universe (cf. Gordon 1992:212-216).

British rule (1906-1966)

Historians generally represent the impact of British colonial rule in Africa as strengthening the hand of the local elite, and thus preserving institutions such as *botlhanka* (see, for

example, Morton 1994:233). But the reality was rather more complex with respect to *botlhanka* in Ngamiland; although colonial authority strengthened local hierarchies in some respects, it also functioned to undermine them.

The British colonial authority took some time to make their presence felt in Ngamiland. Despite the declaration of Botswana as a British protectorate in 1885, it was not until 1894 that the first British administrative post in Ngamiland was established. Even then, it was only after the British deposed the 'insubordinate' Motawana chief Sekgoma in 1906 that they took a more direct role in the affairs of Ngamiland. In the British tradition of colonialism, their rule was indirect, channelled through the existing political structures, which tended to strengthen the position of chiefs. Nonetheless, colonial rule heralded a new political dispensation based on an authority beyond that which Batawana state had made for itself. Eager to assert their authority after the deposition of Sekgoma, Ralph Williams, the Resident Commissioner based in Mafeking, went on tour to Tsao, the then Batawana capital. He took with him the message of this new authority which subsumed Batawana and subject people alike, which he reported to The High Commissioner in Johannesburg (BNA 1906a):

> I made them all speeches and, in the simplest words I could, I impressed upon them the greatness of the King, the power exercised by your excellency, and the paramount necessity of obeying the orders of the government.

This authority was embodied in the eyes of Batswana in the timeless person of Queen Victoria, nicknamed *Mmamosadinyana* ('The little lady'), to whom three Batswana chiefs had gone to petition for British protection in 1885. Colonial rule is referred to today as *molao o a ga Mmamosadinyana*, or 'the law of Queen Victoria'. *Molao* is a pivotal concept in understanding the construction of Sesarwa ethnicity, one that I return to in later chapters. *Molao* is used by all Sotho-Tswana speakers (Schapera 1955:35-6, Gluckman 1955:164ff) to refer not only to a body of legal rules, but 'law' in its widest sense, encompassing a sense of order, authority, and even civilisation. Dominant representations of Basarwa as 'people of the bush' implied that they lacked this one essential ingredient of sociality; *molao*. Older Basarwa characterise the colonial period as introducing a new form of *molao* that did not belong to Batawana, but encompassed them. In a sense it did to Batawana what the Batawana *molao* had done to Basarwa; defined Batawana as lacking *molao* in certain respects, particularly in their 'barbaric' treatment of Basarwa. The imposition of a colonial *molao* was therefore seen to limit the excesses of violence against Basarwa.

The issue of slavery was a touchy one for the new British administration, having come through the storm of abolition back home. There was continued debate about whether slavery existed or not in the various Batswana chiefdoms, culminating in three reports in the 1930s (Taggart 1933, London Missionary Society 1935, Joyce 1938), but which focused mainly on the Bangwato Reserve, the most powerful of the Batswana polities. The outcomes of each of these investigations were equivocal, informed as much by political expediency as a close analysis of the situation. Despite the unwillingness of the colonial administration to fundamentally challenge the institution of *botlhanka*, however, the concern of some local officials functioned to challenge its excesses.

One such official was Sgt. Fox, a police officer stationed at Mohembo, on the northern border of Ngamiland, who claimed that he had been able to stamp out slavery in the Mohembo area (BNA 1935). He referred to cases that had mainly involved Basarwa working for non-Basarwa, including people that had been bought for goods (for example, a man and woman who had been bought in about 1920 for a gun and a blanket), and people held against their wishes. He spread the message in surrounding villages that 'anyone who has been a slave and applies to be freed from his master, and is in a position to better himself, should be given all assistance to get away and begin life in an independent manner'. His method was to offer assistance (grain and agricultural equipment) for those wishing to leave slavery, but to stop short of enticing them to leave their masters. His activity, however, seems to have been confined to established villages: 'Natives who are at the cattle posts are not in the habit of coming and reporting the wish to leave their masters', he commented (ibid.). Fox observed that many people were attached to masters for whom they worked for no payment, but did not want to leave, a state he did not class as slavery. In his estimation, the result of his policy was that 'nearly all [slaves] have left which proves that independence means quite a lot to them and slavery just the opposite' (ibid.).

The legacy of servitude: memory and experience

Basarwa in the northern sandveld speak today of *botlhanka* not just as an institution their ancestors were subject to, but as an experience from living memory. The extreme forms of terror catalogued by early visitors to Ngamiland were generally no longer a characteristic of *botlhanka* much beyond the beginning of the twentieth century, yet coercion through violence (or the threat of it) was still common. The regular payment of tribute (*sehuba*) to the Batawana chieftainship was a well-established practice that lasted in Mababe until 1940, and some years later in Gudigwa. Thereafter it became less regular and more haphazard. Tribute was most commonly given in the form of honey, meat, skins or ivory. The form of enforced

servitude experienced by many of the older residents of the northern sandveld was coercion into itinerant labour, particularly portage. This was usually instigated by Bakgalagadi hunters and traders, who themselves often hunted on behalf of Batawana. 'I have been beaten by Bakgalagadi', Mma Area, a 60 year old woman from Khwai told me, 'They stepped on my neck, which is why it is weak now. They treated us as donkeys. If we refused [to do what they wanted], they beat us'. Taking children for domestic servants and girls and women as concubines was a practice that also lasted well into the twentieth century. 'Batawana would come here and be well behaved,' explained Mma Kgosi, the wife of Mababe's 70 year-old headman, of the time of her childhood, 'until the time came to leave, and then they would take a child'.

Several families in Gudigwa, were 'owned' by Bakgalagadi families for whom they worked, a relationship that was passed down from generation to generation. Mmadifalana, a 65 year old woman now resident in Khwai, described the nature of this relationship with a Bakgalagadi family at Gabamukuni:

> I know how to speak Sekgalagadi, as they owned [*go rua*] us. My parents worked for them, doing things like hunting and working in their fields, but they were not paid. They were owned by Nyangana's family. I was a child then, so I wasn't forced to work. They were like our parents. If we did something wrong, they would hit us like a child, but they weren't bad. They sometimes married us. We stayed on the edge of their village. We ate from their fields, and when they killed a cow, they gave us meat. We would sometimes accompany them on journeys to Maun, and be given things they bought. If Basarwa complained, they were beaten, but when they were fed up with being told what to do, they refused.

By the mid-twentieth century, a greater degree of 'negotiation' was possible, as Mmadifalana's description illustrates. In part to escape from servitude to Nyangana's family, her family moved from Gabamukuni to Khwai in the late 1960s.

Kaiyowe, a 43 year old nephew of the headman of Gudigwa's first wife, is one of the youngest residents of the northern sandveld to have personally experienced servitude. I found him staying with the headman's family in Gudigwa, where he had been taken by a relative in 1996 who had happened upon him at a Kwangari doctor's cattle-post outside Rundu in Namibia. As a boy, he had gone with his older sister's family to Rundu to look for work. The doctor had taken him as a house-help, and then, after his retirement, to his cattle-post to look after his cattle, where Kaiyowe had worked until recognised and 'rescued' by his relative. He had been paid with nothing other than the food he ate and the clothes he wore.

Kaiyowe's case was perhaps atypical for its time. At the end of the twentieth century, some Basarwa in the northern sandveld were still working for notoriously low wages, such as a calf per year for full-time herding, but these were the only cases I found where no form of monetary payment was involved. Yet servitude nevertheless constitutes a lived experience in the minds of many Basarwa in the northern sandveld, and a most personal reminder of the ethnic hierarchies that evolved in the Batawana chiefdom. Although the nature of mistreatment that these ethnic categories permitted has changed over time, the hierarchies themselves have persisted. Serfdom had all but disappeared by independence in 1966, but it continued to provide a frame of reference through which to take issue with contemporary practices that were reminiscent of those associated with servitude. For example, Mma Kgosi from Mababe pointed to the skin of a rogue lion they had just killed, which the law defined as a government trophy, and exclaimed to me. 'You see, we still pay tribute!' The legacy of serfdom often surfaced in contemporary claims of unequal or derisory treatment by government officials or non-Basarwa neighbours, thus structuring the way that Basarwa conceptualise such interactions. In a similar manner, however, Basarwa also draw upon a history of *challenging* servitude in attempts to challenge contemporary incidents of perceived unequal treatment.

Contesting servitude

Despite the degree of terror used to subjugate Basarwa, numerous instances were recorded of resistance by Basarwa to the established order. One of the most common means by which Basarwa resisted servitude was simply to move. Seiner (1977[1910]:35-6), for example, noted that many Basarwa from the northern sandveld fled to eastern Caprivi and western Zambia to escape Batawana overlordship. He also documented counter-movements to escape Hambukushu and Marotse overlordship. Similar migrations occurred between the 1940s and 1970s: from the Gabamukuni area eastwards along the northern edge of the Okavango Delta towards Khwai; and from the eastern side of the Linyanti/Kwando River system to eastern Caprivi. Such moves were to escape not only mistreatment by Bakgalagadi, but also restrictions on hunting. Zibiso, a forty year old man, who by 1997 had returned to Botswana, explained why his family had fled to Caprivi when he was a child:

> I was born at !Omxa [in the sandveld near Kwando]. When I was still a small boy, my father was arrested by police at Kwando for hunting giraffe. It was in 1971, and we had killed a buffalo and then a giraffe, which we were eating. When we saw a car coming, we knew we were in trouble. The police took me and the other youngsters back to our village, which we had made near Kwando [hunting] camp because my parents worked there. But they beat the four adults, and took them and the meat to Maun. Khomba and Elias got two years in jail, although Elias was let out early. The others came back free. Those days we just ate freely, not thinking that people would come and stop us. After

> that incident, we saw we would all end up in trouble, so our parents moved over to Lizauli in Namibia. At that time, it was easy to cross the border.

During the colonial period, disappearing into the vast sandveld was not so easy for Bayei, who lived in fairly settled villages. The testimony of early commentators indicates that Basarwa were more active than Bayei, not only in escaping domination, but also in actively resisting it. For example, following his tour of Ngamiland in 1906, Ralph Williams, the Resident Commissioner, expressed his puzzlement at the ease with which Bayei, who he heard refer to themselves as 'but flies on a milk pail', seemed to accept Batawana domination (BNA 1906c). He described Bayei as 'a fine athletic race and merry fellows but humble to a degree in estimating their own powers and position... . Mathibe and Tawana put these great big hearty Makuba's [Bayei's] necks under the yoke like an ox in a span'. Basarwa around the Okavango Delta, however, gained themselves a reputation for not being so accepting of domination, as illustrated by a conversation related by Lt Reilly of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police on a patrol of Mababe District in 1907 (BNA 1907a). He noted that some 'Bechuanas' from Khama's country were terrorising 'Makubas [Bayei], Masubias and Masarwas', then commented,

> One of the Masarwas who overheard the foregoing [kidnapping of a Moyei girl by a Motawana] told them it was the old story, the Makubas [Bayei] would never stick up for their rights, and asked them why they would not take a lesson from the Masarwas and the white men who were, in his opinion, the only people who knew how to keep the Batawana in his place. The Masarwa method, I understand, is somewhat drastic.

This 'somewhat drastic' method was, no doubt, the threat of poisoned arrows, which Livingstone (1857) alleged could cause Batawana to 'change their manners to fawning sycophancy' when they met Bushmen. Baines (1864:175) also commented that Letsholathebe (who, as we saw, was not shy of committing atrocities against Basarwa), 'dared not engage them' on their own ground. Basarwa themselves were known to use violence to directly challenge the system of authority, such as in the case of a //Anikhwe man who shot and killed an Mbukushu tax collector with an arrow in June 1905 (Seiner 1977[1910]:34). These threats and actions, as Reilly's unnamed Mosarwa observed, served in these contexts to reverse the established order of power that usually regulated interaction between Basarwa and non-Basarwa.

Probably the greatest single challenge to Batawana authority in Ngamiland came from a Mosarwa leader remembered as N/aikhwe,[15] who claimed authority over a large tract of land near the panhandle of the Delta, and refused to pay tribute to the Batawana chieftainship. He is remembered as a hero by Basarwa in the region today, who recount his attitude as being, 'Those arriving in this land [i.e. Batawana] should be the ones to bring tribute to those they found here'. As such, he presented a challenge not only to the system of authority, but also to the moral universe on which this authority was predicated. Batawana were swift to punish such obstinacy, and in 1881/2, Moremi II dispatched a regiment that killed N/aikhwe (cf. Hurwitz 1956:22).

Alongside these historical accounts is a genre of contemporary narratives eulogising instances of revolt against mistreatment. Some of these refer to incidents in the distant past, such as that of N/aikhwe, or the claim that the ancestors of those presently in Mababe once beat Molatedi's grandfather with sticks - in the words of one old man from Mababe - 'to stop him trying to oppress us, and because he thought we were Basarwa and didn't respect us'. Molatedi was the chief of Shorobe, whose family had been made responsible for collecting tribute from Mababe and Sankuyu on behalf of the Batawana chieftainship. Other accounts refer to more recent acts of revolt, such as beating up game scouts who accused them of poaching. For example, in the late 1960s Kwere, the late headman of Khwai, tied a game scout to a tree who had reported him for illegally killing a giraffe. People in Gudigwa also talk of instances such as the time a Department of Wildlife and National Parks vehicle arrived with a resident they believed was unfairly accused of poaching rhino. Men and women set upon the vehicle when it entered the village, breaking its windows and beating the officers with whatever they had at hand, including sticks, live chickens and charcoal. It is not always possible to ascertain retrospectively the level of exaggeration in such stories, but they carry the common theme of celebrating brazen acts of resistance to a system that they believe continues to discriminate against them because of their ethnicity. As such, these narratives forge a link between the past and the present, keeping alive a sense of not only the existence of discrimination, but also of active resistance to it.

Basarwa also challenge the legitimacy of Batawana hegemony in Ngamiland on a discursive level. 'Batawana are really Basarwa', was a comment I frequently heard, referring in part to memories of the bouts of nomadism and foraging that Batawana endured as a means of survival in their early years in Ngamiland, when they existed on a relatively equal level with

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[15] Some Khwe-speaking Basarwa in northwestern Ngamiland refer to themselves as N/aikhwe. He is therefore most probably remembered today after the name of his people.

Basarwa. This comment also refers to the numerical status of Batawana subsequently being boosted by incorporating Basarwa (among other 'minorities') into their ranks by appropriating the reproductive capacity of Basarwa women, whose children were then brought up as Batswana. By implying the real Motswana is a Mosarwa, Basarwa turn on its head the often-quoted (Gadibolae 1984, Morton 1994:248, Wilmsen 1995a:319) Setswana adage, '*Mosarwa ke yo motonanyana, yo monamagadi ke Mongwato*', meaning, 'The real Mosarwa is the male one, the female one is a Mongwato'.[16] Basarwa in the northern sandveld also refer to Batawana derisively as *Barwa,* the name by which they were known when they arrived in Ngamiland (Passarge 1997 [1905]:225), meaning 'those that come from the south'. Ironically, *Barwa* was also the name that southern Batswana used to refer to those now called Basarwa. Many Basarwa speak as well of the open secret that Seretse Khama (the first president of Botswana)'s mother was a Mosarwa.[17] Thus Dice, Khwai's Village Development Committee chairman, could contend that, 'when Ian [Khama, son of Seretse, and then head of the Botswana Defence Force and its Anti-Poaching Unit] comes here he respects us, because he knows he is among *bo-malome* [his mother's brothers]'. Each of these statements serves to discursively undermine Batswana claims to difference from Basarwa, and thus their claims of superiority.

Servitude and other forms of mistreatment form an important part not only of the collective memory, but also of the individual experiences of many older adults. Nonetheless, as these various examples demonstrate, Basarwa often did not passively accept domination. It was often directly or indirectly resisted. These acts of resistance form an important element of contemporary narratives of inequality and domination, which also serve to undermine the legitimacy of contemporary Batawana hegemony.

Authority and incorporation

Basarwa, as those who may be classed as 'peasants' in Africa, have historically managed to enjoy a degree of autonomy from the state. Their principle form of struggle has been over the *extent* of this partial autonomy. Most studies of peasant resistance in Africa have set the arena of autonomy as agriculture, in resistance to labour (Isaacsman 1990:58), whereas in the case of Basarwa the possibility of hunting and gathering has provided a measure of autonomy from both agriculture and labour. However, both *kgamelo* and *botlhanka* worked to articulate Basarwa into the dominant system of authority as an underclass, and thus reduce their scope for autonomy.

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[16] Bangwato are the largest of the Setswana-speaking tribes of Botswana.
[17] Probably from the Nata area, where Khama kept many of his cattle.

Of course, authority over people and over land was not a privilege that originated solely with Batawana. Basarwa too had their own band leaders, which were referred to by Batawana as *Rraabo* ('their father'), rather than *kgosi* ('chief') or even *kgosana* ('little chief' or 'headman'). The Bugakhwedam and Ts'exadam word for 'chief', *//'axa*, was also generally reserved for non-Basarwa. Although they were given no official title or position by the Batawana chieftainship, Basarwa leaders still functioned as intermediaries through whom tribute was collected, or hunting parties organised. As such, these local structures of power were recognised, incorporated, and 'hidden' into the dominant Batawana structures. One example of this was the practice of taking Basarwa women as wives (rather than concubines). Hambukushu chiefs, for example, had a practice of taking one Mosarwa wife (Christo Weiss: pers. comm.) as a means of incorporating them into their social sphere, and thus maintaining a degree of control over them. In a similar manner, some Basarwa today claim that Seretse's Mosarwa mother was a purposeful strategy to end talk of *motswakwa* ('foreigners'), a derisive label that Basarwa gave Batswana to undermine the legitimacy of their authority.

As violent coercion decreased through the twentieth century, the continuation of established social hierarchies depended less on violence and more on the hegemony that naturalised such conceptions of power, promoting the acceptance of them by subject people. This was clearly evident in a reply Sangando gave to a young man who facetiously asked him as we visited his ancestral land why he votes for a 'black' government (literally *≠u* – 'head'), leaving behind his own 'head' here in his land. Sangando was one of the oldest men in his village, and also one of the least willing to be 'villagised' when the government created Gudigwa as a settlement in 1988, and as such he represented what the young considered to be 'old ways' of thinking. 'We had no head and were spread around this land', Sangando replied. 'BDP [the ruling party since independence] became our head and pulled us together'. Political authority thus became accepted by some Basarwa as something to which they needed to become subject, but which they themselves could not own.

The degree to which previous generations accepted these social structures was at times a point of teasing between young and old. Take, for example, the following jibe by Oral, the headman of Gudigwa's son, to Patrick, the head of Gudigwa's Village Development Committee, as they discussed the possibilities of Gudigwa setting up their own CBNRM Project:

> O: We are giving up on you old people. You tried and failed. It is yourselves that have messed us up.
> P: How?

O: Well, for example, rushing to your white friends to get them involved in our project without proper consultation first.
P: Whites are our friends. We need them for our project to succeed.
O: But they cheated you. They came and used your Special Game Licences to hunt and took most of your meat. The blacks cheated you as well. They came and took what they wanted from your land, and you just let them do it. What did you say to them when they told you to carry their belongings? 'You are welcome here with your good manners'? [*laughter*].
P: In those days we were not aware that such behaviour was wrong. It is only now that we realise that such things are oppression, and we will not stand for it.

The forms of Batawana hegemony that resulted in Basarwa being 'unaware' that what they were subject to could or should have been anything different began to be broken down during the colonial era, and received further blows after independence in 1966. The new president, Seretse Khama, actively promoted a message of equality as citizens of Botswana. Returning to Sangando, he related the arrival of Seretse's message thus:

> I remember when the chief [Seretse Khama] said *botlhanka* should stop. It was after independence. I heard the message [passed on] at the *kgotla* in Seronga, and I was happy. They said that we are all made by God, and our only master is him. They said that you cannot own [*go rua*] your younger brother, when our father is present. I understood and liked that message, but some refused to listen to it. It was this *molao* [law] that made it possible for me to refuse *botlhanka*. Before that I was just in the bush and didn't know anything.

Sangando was frequently joked with for being, in his own words, 'just in the bush and not knowing anything'. For example, there was the time he was taken to court in 1981 because he tried to sell a pair of elephant tusks to an undercover policeman for the princely sum of P30 (then equivalent to about £15). Statements such as that by Sangando about the bush and ignorance reveal not only the extent of Batawana hegemony, but also the potent symbolism that this hegemony brought into being. 'The bush' became not just the realm of Basarwa, but a domain of ignorance and powerlessness; a recurring theme in this thesis.

With respect to their Basarwa neighbours, Batswana achieved a feat that Morton (1994:239) points out was almost unique in Africa; that of reducing their immediate neighbours to bondage. He suggests two reasons why many Basarwa tolerated this subjugation. Firstly, fleeing was generally not an option, as 'most Basarwa simply had nowhere to go if their land was conquered' (1994:240), and secondly, staying put generally allowed Basarwa to continue using their own land for activities such as foraging. The experiences of Basarwa in the northern sandveld contradict the first reason, but concur with the second. As the next chapter will make clear, kinship networks extended over vast distances, and there was a fair degree of

fluidity in the membership of territory-based social groups that these networks allowed (cf. Silberbauer 1981:142 for G/wi and G//anna). Basarwa who wanted to move to escape subjugation thus often could, and did, do so. I suggest that the pervasive domination of Basarwa was enabled by a combination of Batawana hegemony that to an extent naturalised a strong social hierarchy, along with the strategic use of terror. Furthermore, as Morton correctly observes, fleeing was tantamount to surrendering claim to the land on which they lived, a cost that many Basarwa did not want to pay for the opportunity to escape subjugation. This was attested to by Uma Sekere, 85-year old mother of Gudigwa's headman, whose family endured at least four generations of 'ownership' by Bakgalagadi in their land:

> We did not flee, because it was our own land, and we did not want to give it up. We stayed so that when they died or went, we would still have our land.

Their patience paid off; she passed away during my fieldwork, in her own land, and no longer a servant of Bakgalagadi.

Conclusion

The particular historical experience of the various encounters between Basarwa and Bantu-speaking immigrants in Ngamiland illuminates the means by which ethnicity has become a central factor in negotiating access to political power. Their status as 'hunter-gatherers', and thus somehow different from the agro-pastoralist societies that came to dominate them, ensured that they were excluded from the political hierarchies that were established in Ngamiland over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rather than their ethnic label being a *product* of economic domination, as revisionists argue, this *prior* relation of difference proved useful to the expanding Batawana polity in justifying and facilitating their economic subjugation.

The nature of domination has changed over the past three centuries of interaction between Basarwa and Bantu-speakers in Ngamiland. From initial relationships of equality and mutual co-operation, Batawana were able to consolidate their political authority through the selective incorporation of subject tribes, which excluded Basarwa. Basarwa instead found themselves subject to increasing coercion and violence in efforts to secure their services. Although the frequency of such violent excesses declined through the twentieth century, their vestiges remain in the experiences of older Basarwa, and in the collective memories of both young and old. Their vestiges also remain in the continued social stigma of being labelled 'Mosarwa', and perceived mistreatment this sometimes entails. This is a history that has contributed to shaping present patterns of power in Ngamiland, and also one which Basarwa often refer to in

making sense of, and challenging, contemporary structures of authority. Just as dominant notions of Basarwa ethnicity were used to ideologically underpin their domination, expressions of Basarwa ethnicity, drawing in part on a common experience of subjugation, are becoming used to challenge relations of inequality.

Probably the most salient legacy of these patterns of domination in the northern sandveld is their spatial expression in the landscape. Control over land is today an issue of intense contestation and negotiation, and it is to the mapping of authority over land that I turn in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Land and landscape

On most maps of Botswana, the large green triangle of the Okavango Delta sits conspicuously in the centre of Ngamiland. On larger scale maps, the complex topographical features are faithfully displayed in great detail; the myriad perennial and annual waterways, as well as floodplains, tracks, islands, safari camps, along with the variously-ascribed names of each of these places. The northern sandveld, in contrast, is conspicuous only by the large expanse of emptiness that marks the space between the Okavango Delta and the Caprivi Strip. Apart from a few sites on old trade routes, and old tourist camps, the land is represented as featureless and without name. To those with the power to make maps, the northern sandveld may not carry the hydrological or tourist interest of the adjacent Delta. Nonetheless, its intricate surface of sands and soils, waterholes, trees and animal routes, is intimately known and named by those who have lived in it. Yet, this land is more than an inert series of features that can be reduced to colours and lines on a map. It is also a *landscape* of semiotics (cf. Moore 1993:396) that carries a web of shared and contested meanings between the many different people that have experience and interest in it.

Within the context of the wider structures of authority and power developed in the preceding chapter, this chapter draws the analysis to the particular historical contexts of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa, focusing particularly on patterns of authority over land. The experiences and contexts of each of these three villages provides a lens for examining a different aspect of the overall story of material and symbolic struggle over land, which has been shaped largely by

the ascendant demands on land of conservation and tourism. The first section, on the changing patterns of Basarwa land tenure through different historical dispensations, refers mainly to the experiences of Gudigwa, and Khwai and Mababe provide the base for the second and third sections on the more contemporary dynamics of the rise of conservationism.

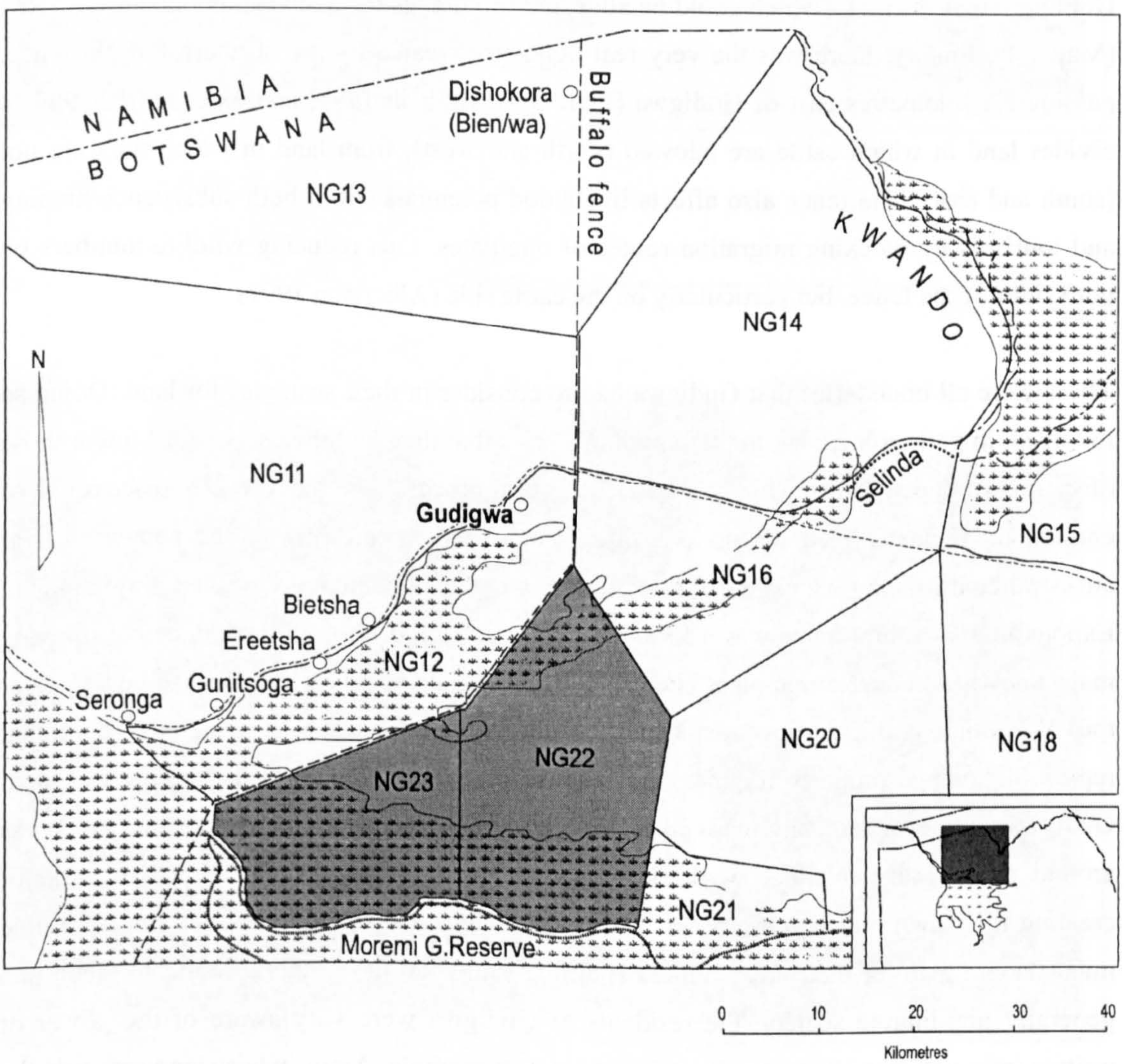
Gudigwa

The village of Gudigwa was created in 1988, through the Remote Area Development Programme's policy of creating service centres in rural areas, to promote the aggregation of scattered settlements. It was made up mostly of people that moved there from //Gam/wi, and Letshaobe, both nearby settlements. Each of these small settlements was in turn made up of people that had moved together at different times in the preceding decade, from their different family areas that covered much of the northern sandveld. The population of Gudigwa was hard to estimate, as it was in constant flux; residents moved to and from Namibia, Shakawe and Maun as they went to school, sought work, or visited relatives. I counted 345 residents in April 1998, but 649 people were registered for food handouts under the CBPP programme. Allowing for a few beneficial 'phantom' residents, the total population of Gudigwa was probably around 600, of which one-half to two-thirds may actually be there at any one time. Yet Gudigwa did not give the impression of being a village of this size. From any one place in the village, no more than a handful of huts were visible. Gudigwa could be more accurately described as a cluster of small villages spread over several kilometres, with each section (of the ten families that came together to form Gudigwa) separated by a band of trees. The layout of Gudigwa is therefore a spatial expression of both the centripetal forces arising from the advantages of living together, and the centrifugal forces inherited from a history of smaller units of social organisation. Apart from a cattle post at Dishokora (Plate 3.3), Gudigwa is now the only settlement remaining on the land that its residents claim historically as their own. As such, it represents the culmination of a process of gradual agglomeration that has been taking place over the past two generations. Kinship bonds extend between these family groups, uniting all the residents of Gudigwa, so that each is able to claim at least some form of relation to the others. All the residents of Gudigwa consider themselves Bugakhwe, making Gudigwa probably the largest wholly Basarwa village in Botswana.

'Mapping the land'

Mapping their ancestral land was an idea that arose from discussions on how to present their case to be allocated an area of land under the new Community Based Natural Resource (CBNRM) programme. The residents of Gudigwa were unhappy at being combined in a Community Trust with four other villages; Seronga, Gunitshoga, Ereetsha and Beetsha, each of which only have a minority of Bugakhwe or //Anikhwe residents, and are dominated

numerically and politically by Hambukushu and/or Bayei. The Trust, named Okavango Community Trust (OCT), was allocated two Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs), NG22 and NG23, which were a distance from Gudigwa itself (Map 3.1). The residents of Gudigwa felt that the other villages did not respect them, being Basarwa, as equal partners in OCT, thus denying them a fair share of the benefits. They felt this especially sharply, as they had given up their Special Game Licences, which allowed each family to hunt a quota of animals, in exchange for a Community Quota, given to OCT as a whole. All in all, people in Gudigwa felt that they had sacrificed more, and benefited less, than the other villages in OCT. They therefore wanted to secede, in order to form their own Community Trust, and be allocated their own CHA.



Map 3.1 Gudigwa with other Okavango Community Trust villages and surrounding Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs allocated to OCT shaded).

Debating which areas that they could be allocated under CBNRM became a discussion of the different boundaries that had been drawn across their land, and their potential entitlements within them. They spoke of their own historic family boundaries, of the ten families that had come together over the last two generations to form Gudigwa. In places these boundaries were crosscut by the colonial ones now marked between Botswana and the Caprivi Strip by a triple fence, the middle one electrified. There were the boundaries on the map drawn up in 1968 that divided Ngamiland into concession areas for citizen hunting and safari hunting, determining where Gudigwa could hunt the animals listed on their Special Game Licences. These fell away and were replaced with new divisions in 1991 (GOB 1991) when Ngamiland's concession areas were redrawn, dividing the whole district into 49 Controlled Hunting Areas, some of which could be allocated to villages for management under CBNRM (Map 7.1). Finally, there was the very real boundary created by the northern buffalo fence, passing six kilometres east of Gudigwa (Plate 3.4). Built in 1991, and extended in 1997, it divides land in which cattle are allowed (north and west), from land in which they are not (south and east). The fence also affects livelihood potentials (from both subsistence hunting and tourism) by blocking migration routes of ungulates, thus reducing wildlife numbers on both sides of the fence, but particularly on the cattle side (Albertson 1997).

These were all boundaries that Gudigwa had to consider in their struggles for land. Doing so involved, in part, going back to the only boundaries that they had themselves instituted; those of their own family lands. This was initially an oral process, one that arose in discussions of entitlement to land. Such discussions often led to people referring to the names of their ancestral lands, listing the names of the different areas as they mentally walked through them. Expounding such oral maps was a local strategy akin to more formal techniques of drawing maps known as 'counter-mapping' (Peluso 1995). Counter-mapping has come to be a popular tool by which political movements and community groups attempt to counter dominant representations of property regimes and landuse practices (Poole 1995). Most residents of Gudigwa had never seen any maps of their area to be aware of the big expanse of blankness around their village. Neither were they aware before our discussions of the potential of creating their own map to promote their own land rights or provide the basis for a possible management plan for their area. While paper maps may not have otherwise meant much in a generally non-literate society, the residents of Gudigwa were very aware of the power of written information and images about their land. For example, Amos, whose land area was the largest of the ten, was offended that the aerial photos we referred to as we mapped his land,

Plate 3.1: Entering Gudigwa.

Plate 3.2: Old village site in the northern sandveld (Tsekugwa).

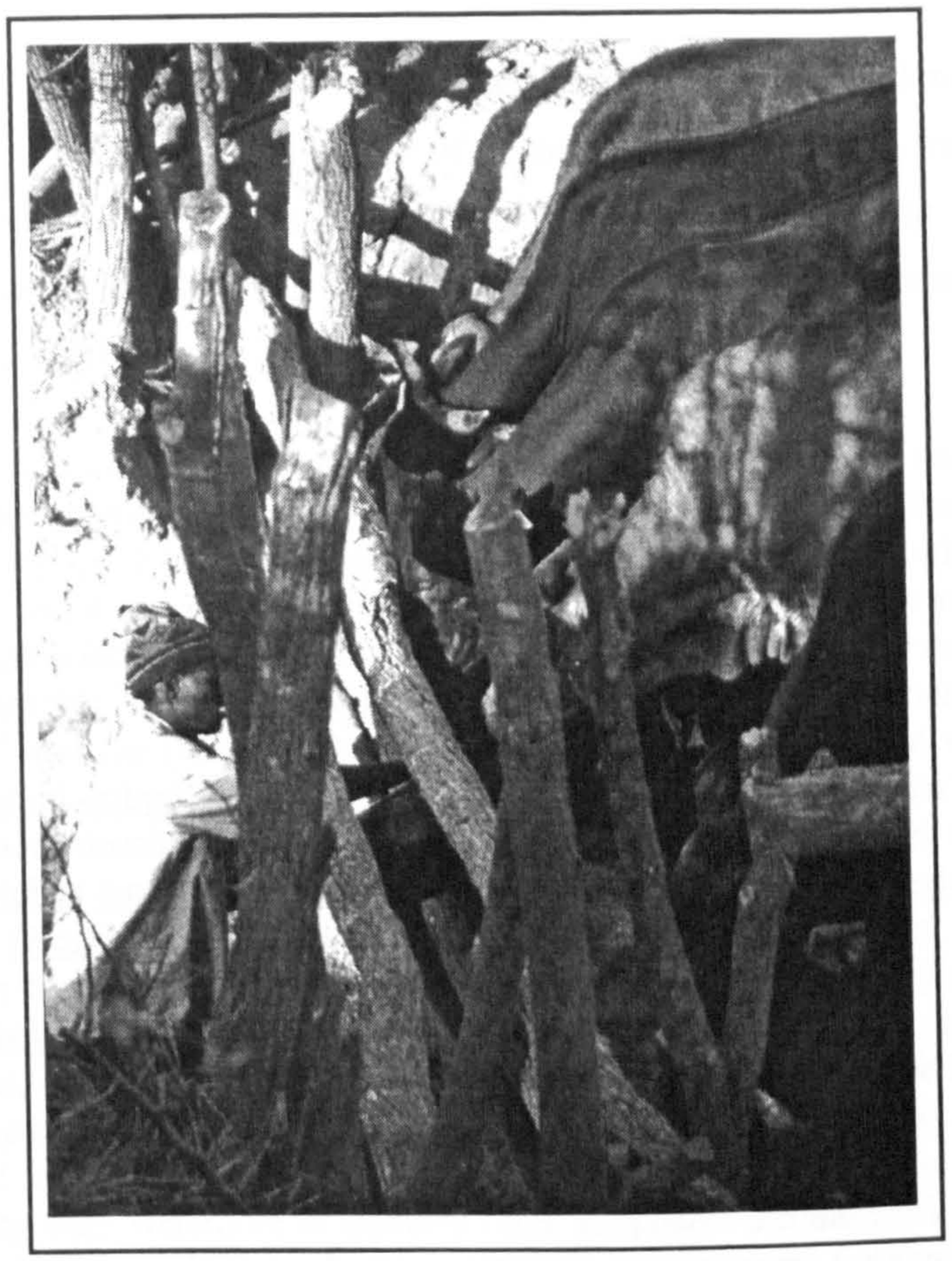


Plate 3.3: Cattle at Dishokora being watered.

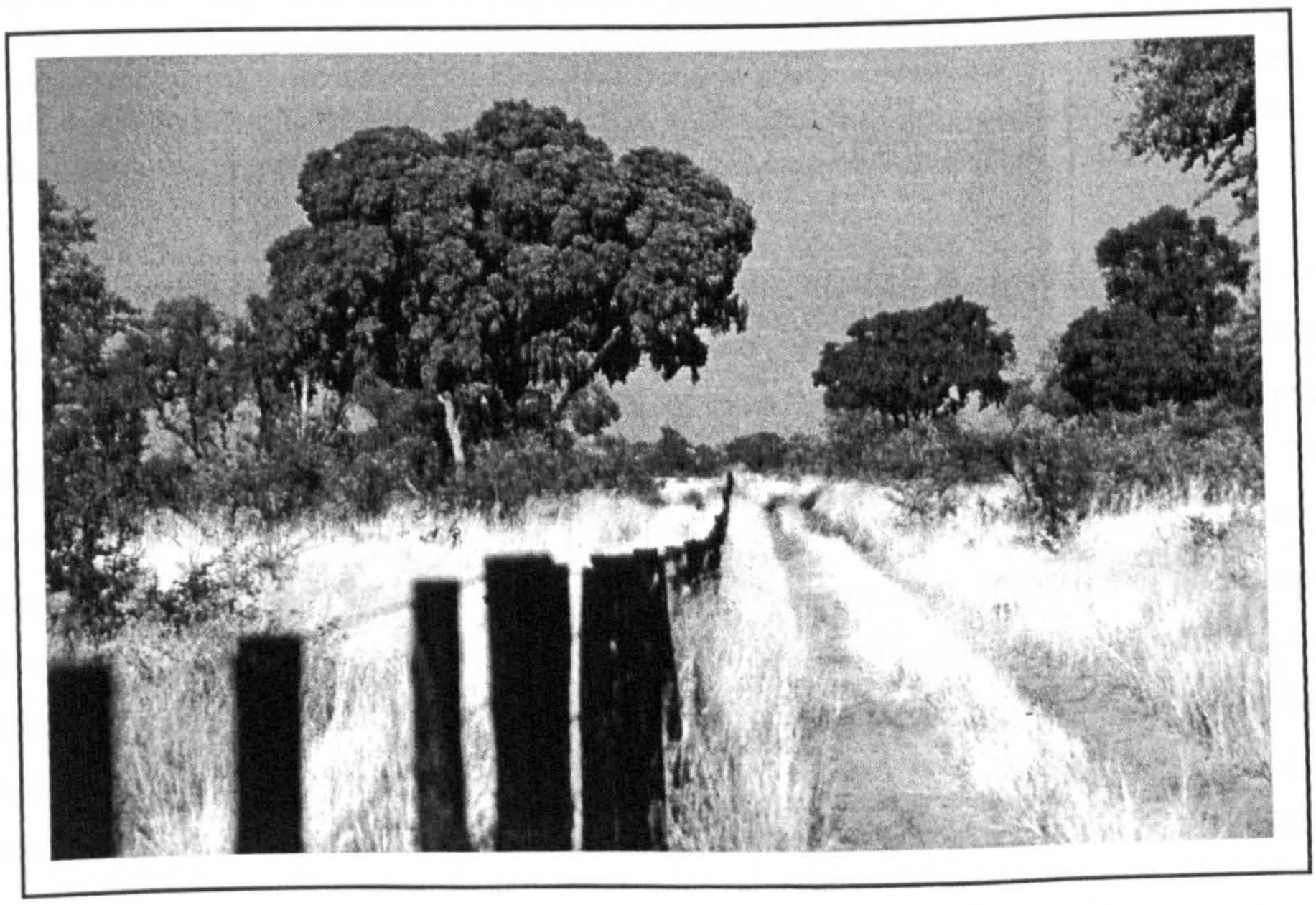


Plate 3.4: Buffalo fence near Gudigwa.

produced by the Department of Surveys and Lands, had been taken without his permission. Thus the idea of producing a 'counter map' of Gudigwa's ancestral land was born. *Masarwa Community*, the committee they had set up themselves to motivate for their own CHA, arranged for members of each family to go out with me to their respective ancestral lands and plot important sites of settlement, boundary, subsistence, water and travel:

> Three intense weeks of driving and walking produced a map covering an area of about 7,000 square kilometres, in which we recorded 454 place names. Like much of the Kalahari, the land is flat, except the northern section that undulates with east - west running fossil sand dunes. It is a mosaic of fossil riverbeds, whose clay soils seasonally hold water in the waterholes that are scattered along them, and the sand mantle that rises almost imperceptibly between the clay depressions. The clay depressions support thick monostands of mopane (***//oro***, Colophospermum mopane) interspersed with leadwood (***≠'oo***, Combretum imberbe). The sand mantle between these depressions supports more varied vegetation, dominated in the south by species such as Kalahari Christmas tree (***/oe***, Dichrostachys cinerea), sand yellowwood (***tsheree***, Terminalia sericea) and raisin bush (***//qani***, Grewia spp). As one moves northwards, this changes to more open grassland with canopies of bloodwood (***n/gao***, Pterocarpus angolensis) and Rhodesian teak (***gwa***, Baikiaea plurijuga). In the south, the sandveld meets the open grassland of the old floodplains, dotted with thickly wooded islands of trees (Bugakhwe land taxonomy is listed in Appendix Two). Driving through land with no roads or tracks was a difficult process. Most of the time we followed the well-used elephant paths that formed a network linking each waterhole to adjacent ones. Elephants did the work of maintaining a gap through the bush, which made these paths the easiest routes for animals and people on their journeys. Known as ***oo dao*** [***oo*** – gap, ***dao*** – path], these paths, with waterholes at their intersections, were the spines that made up the mental maps of the landscape, upon which hung other areas of importance (Plates 3.5, 3.6). Except for a few isolated safari hunting camps, and the cattle post at Dishokora, this land is now uninhabited. Yet, people who have now moved to Gudigwa lived in parts of it recently enough that there are sites where wells that have not caved in, roof support poles are standing, and where the debris of life, such as shoes, knives and ploughs, can be found (Plate 3.2).

By sharing knowledge of the land - not only its names, but also the location of fruitful areas and sites where water was close to the surface - I was inserted into Gudigwa's negotiations of power over land; given knowledge that could be used against, as well as for, their interests. Initially, there were lively private debates about my involvement in mapping their land. I first discovered this when Sangando, one of the elder men, asked me, 'Some people say you are writing down our land so you can kill Basarwa and take our land. Is that true?' The issue of land was without doubt a very sensitive one locally, illustrating not only its importance in the present, but also their painful history of alienation from it. Basarwa were very aware that in showing the land to others in the past who had then taken control of it – chiefs, administrators, hunters, conservationists – that they had been implicated in the alienation of

their own land.[18] I was thus left with a caution not to share sensitive information with officials who may be able to use it to the detriment of residents of Gudigwa, such as in anti-poaching operations.

Maps represent views of the land, sites and channels of interest to those with the power to influence mapmaking. They therefore speak of authority and power not just to name, but to make those names heard. This is a form of power generally held by the state, which can use maps to more effectively control a peasant or tenant population (Harley 1988:284, Scott 1998). Creating a map for Gudigwa's own use thus became an exercise in appropriating the 'power to nominate' (Parkin 1982:xlvi), and asserting the rights that should come from their own power to name the land. Travelling through their family lands also presented numerous opportunities to discuss their relationships to land, both past and present. What arose displayed a unity of social identity, local history and landscape, as much an expression of identity as a declaration of rightful possession. These expressions were rooted in the concrete representations of places, and stand in contrast to the more abstract Edenic ideas of African landscape explored in the next chapter. I use what arose from some of these discussions as a basis for the following sections on the historical nature of Basarwa land tenure, the impact on land tenure systems of non-Basarwa immigrants, and contemporary attitudes to land tenure.

Historical land tenure

The nature of Basarwa land tenure has been a contentious issue, especially as it has come to bear on issues of contemporary land rights. In facing the very real issue of the erosion of land rights for Basarwa, Wily (1994:8) argues that 'the most urgent need at this point is simply for the state to recognise, once and for all, that contrary to local opinion, Basarwa did *own* land through their customary tenure system'. Recognising that anthropological constructions of Basarwa as nomadic have contributed to misconceptions that Basarwa make no claims to specific territories,[19] anthropologists have tended since the 1970s to stress notions of Basarwa territoriality. Lee, for example, reversed his original tenet that Ju/'hoansi have no concept of land tenure (1972), to state that they 'do own the land they occupy' (1979:337). However, concepts such as 'own' and 'territory' are socially related concepts that have little meaning

[18] Most of the early white travellers through Ngamiland gave credit to the Basarwa guides on whom they were so reliant. The Resident Commissioner, for example, described Basarwa on a visit to Mababe in 1906 as 'the most useful to meet of all people' (BNA 1906a).

[19] The most often-quoted remark of this nature was made by a litigation consultant in the Attorney General's Chambers regarding common-law leases of tribal land in 1978: 'As far as I have been able to ascertain, the Masarwa have always been true nomads, owing no allegiance to any chief or tribe, but have ranged far and wide for a very long time over large areas of the Kalahari... . It appears to me that a true nomad Masarwa can have no rights of any kind except to hunting' (in Hitchcock 1978:242).

unless embedded in the social systems of which they are a part (Carstens 1983:60). The process of writing land tenure systems as an institution can give the impression that they existed as a coherent set of rules and practices, which they did not (Peters 1994, Neumann 1997). There were, nonetheless, commonalities – subject to some debate – in the way land tenure in the past was spoken about, and it is both these commonalities and the contemporary debates over them that are examined here.

While there are differences in the tenure systems of the many people that have become subsumed under the umbrella 'Basarwa' (Barnard 1992a:223ff), the most important common element is that entitlement to land has been mediated through social relationships (e.g. Cashdan 1977:22-4 for G//ana; Heinz 1972 for !Xõ; Barnard 1979, 1980 for Nharo; Silberbauer 1981:99 for G/wi; Lee 1979:333-43 for Ju/'hoansi). People therefore became associated with geographic space through their position in a social network. Ownership was therefore neither individual nor absolute, but negotiated by individuals through relationships at a community level; a principle that applied to tenure systems across southern Africa, Basarwa and Bantu-speakers alike. These similarities made tenure systems between Basarwa and their neighbours mutually intelligible, and, to some extent, complementary, so that their landholdings could overlap where necessary. Figuring entitlement through a social matrix that extended over many hundred of kilometres enabled migration over wide areas. The origins of some of the elderly residents of Gudigwa, for example, ranges from southern Angola and western Zambia to the north, and beyond the Okavango River to the west. Many such people gained, or concretised, entitlement to lands in the northern sandveld through marriage. Cross-cousin marriage was the preferred norm, as for other Khwe speakers (Barnard 1992a:127, Silberbauer 1981:148), and I estimated that about eighty percent of northern sandveld residents over the age of sixty had married a classificatory cross-cousin.

The land that people in Gudigwa considered their own was divided into ten family 'territories', as illustrated on the map that was produced from the land mapping (Appendix Five). These were not, however, absolute territories belonging to absolute families. Our land mapping exercise captured land ownership as it was figured in a specific historical moment; memories at the end of the twentieth century of lived patterns from several decades previously. Relations were, and are, negotiable, and consequently entitlements to land, and the way land was divided, also changed. The average size of the seven territories whose complete borders we were able to map (counting Amos and Sangando's land as two), was 915 square kilometres (Table 3.1). Although this figure is significantly larger than the 300-600 square kilometres that Lee (1979:334) estimated for Ju/'hoan ***n!oresi*** in Ngamiland's western

sandveld, the per capita area of territory is similar; roughly 30.5 square kilometres per person for Bugakhwe in Gudigwa, as compared to Lee's 24 square kilometres.[20] The larger overall territory size for Bugakhwe may be partly due to the gradual agglomeration of land that has taken place. For example, the largest of the territories mapped was that of Amos, which in the past was considered separate from Sangando's land. Due to the close relationship of the two families, they have used each other's land, and over the past generation, have congregated for extended periods in common villages such as Ghoi and Letshaobe. A similar process appears to have occurred in the Kgalagadi District, where Wily (1974:21) reported an average territory size of 1,500 square kilometres, but each with about 150 claimants. Land was also divisible, as relationships changed. //Ae/exo's land, lying to the west of Kharakhwe's, provides a case in point. In the early 1900s, his father, Borakanelo, migrated down from Bwabwata on the border between West Caprivi and Angola. Borakanelo was following his sister, who had been married to a man from the Dishokora area. Borakanelo already had a wife from Namibia, and took Kharakhwe's classificatory sister as a second wife. Kharakhwe in turn took Borakanelo's daughter, and //Ae/exo's half sister, Kwima, as a wife. As a result of this double alliance, Kharakhwe gave Borakanelo the western portion of his land, which is today still regarded as belonging to Borakanelo's descendants, rather than Kharakhwe's.

Name	Territory size (km^2)
Taetso	587
Khwarako	719
//Ae/exo	761
Rapula	974
Goo	1387
Amos and Sangando (combined)	1978
Average	**915**

Table 3.1; Family land size for seven of the ten main families that now live in Gudigwa.

[20] Based on an average occupancy size of thirty (my estimate) for Bugakhwe in a territory of 915 square kilometres, as compared to 18.9 for Ju/'hoansi (Lee 1979:60) in a territory of 450 square kilometres.

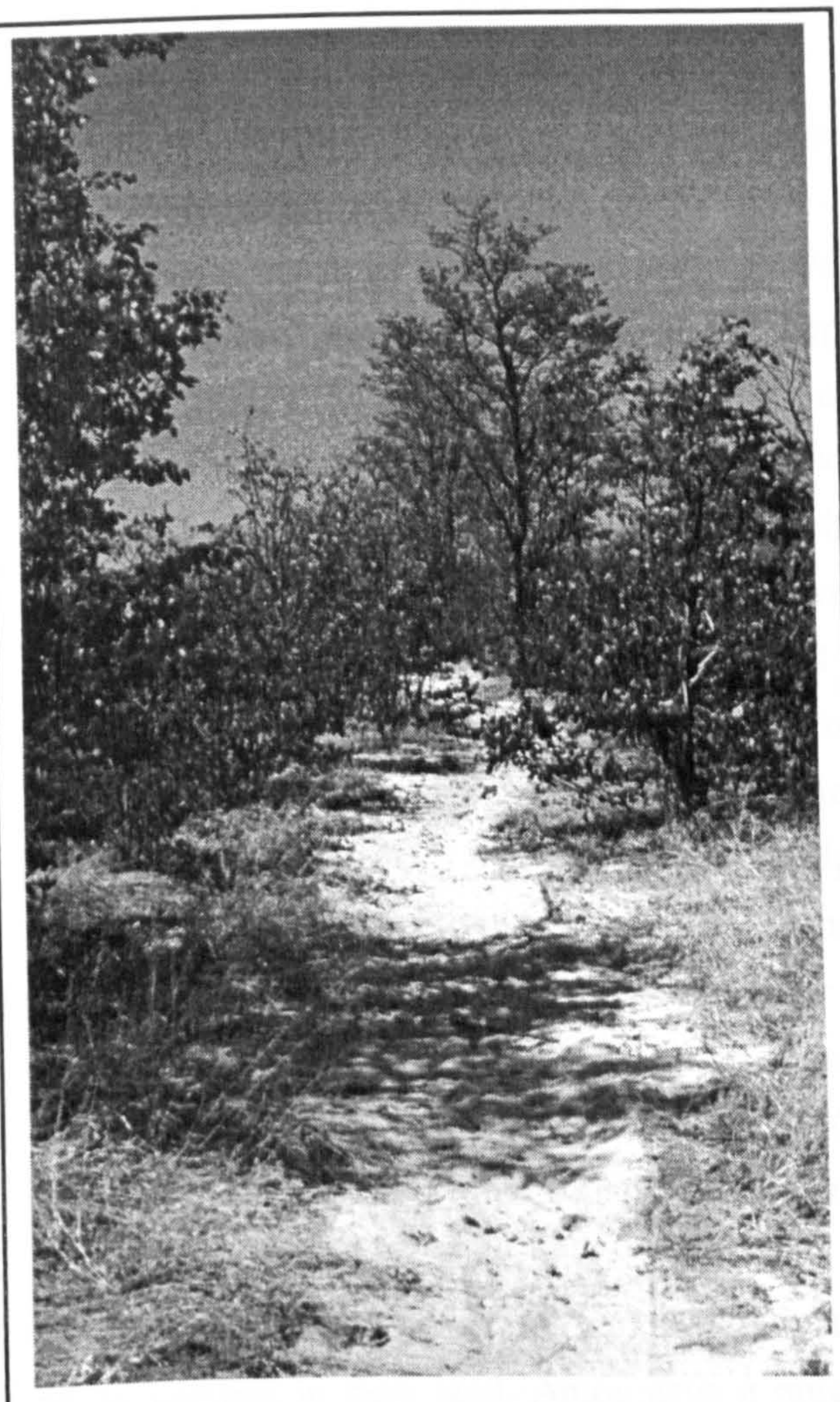


Plate 3.5: Elephant path through the bush (***oo dao***).

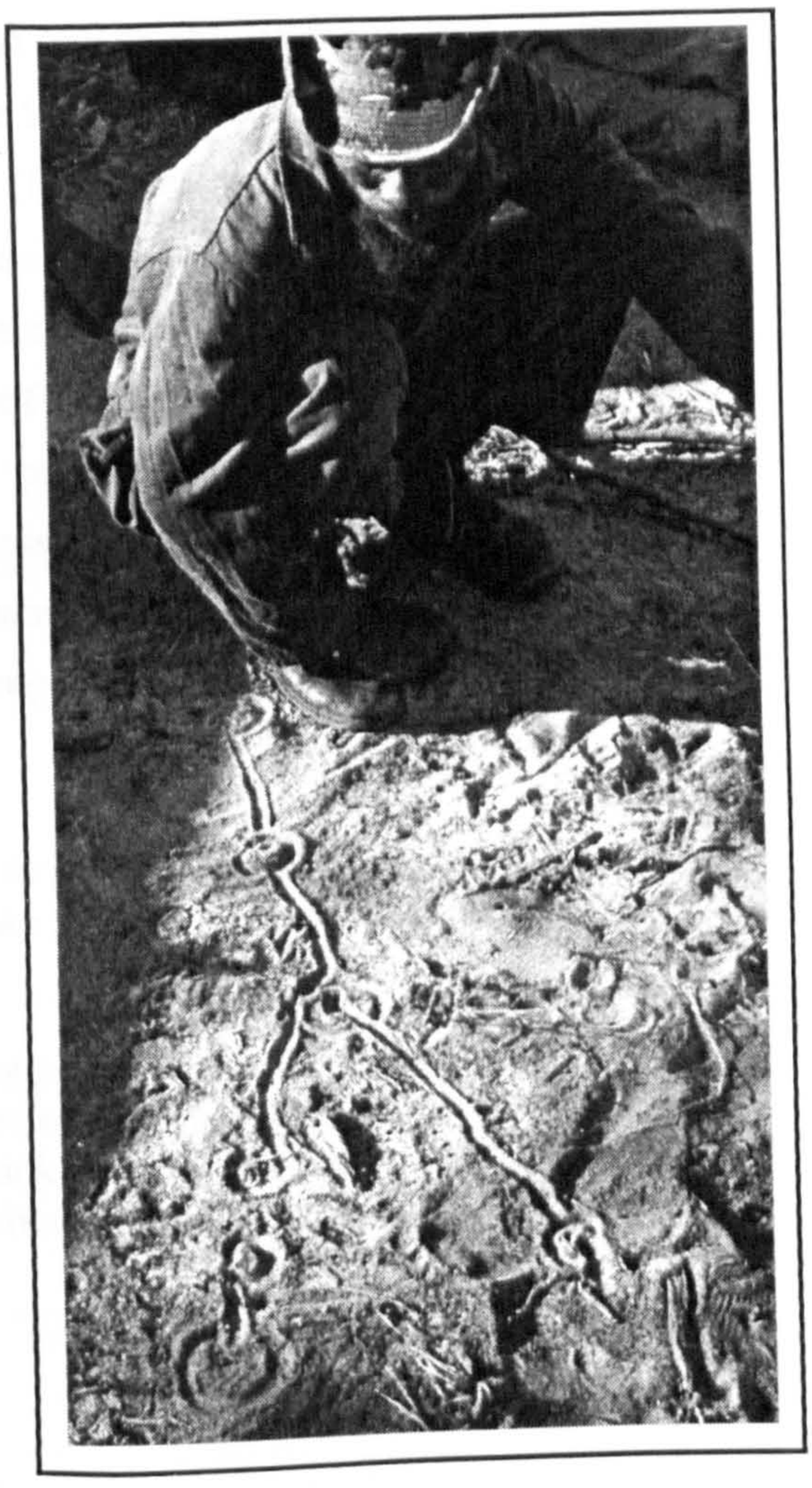


Plate 3.6: Amos drawing maps in the sand; a network of waterholes (***oro***) connected by elephant paths (***oo dao***).

The Bugakhwedam and Ts'exadam word for land is *ngu*, which Cashdan (1977:22-4) translates for //Ganakhwe as 'place' or 'territory'. This is similar in meaning to the Ju/'hoansi word *n!ore*, which Wilmsen (1989a:51-54) argues carries connotations of belonging, and translates as 'place in land/country' (1989b:162). However, the Bugakhwedam *ngu* is closer in meaning to the Setswana *lefatshe*, meaning simply 'land', rather than 'territory'. There is no specific, and commonly used, word that implies land belonging to particular people.[21] When referring to a family territory, Bugakhwe use the possessive construct 'my land' (*tl da ngu a*), or more commonly, 'the land of my father' (*mba m da ngu a*), emphasising the relational element of establishing rights to specific territories. Rather than being framed in terms of 'my land', claims to specific tracts were communicated to me as, 'This is the land my mother's brothers and grandfathers showed me when I was young, saying, "See, my nephew, this is our land, this is where you must look for food"'. As such, land can be referred to as inheritance (*soto* in Bugakhwedam), or, more accurately, what is inherited is not land *per se*, but a position in a network of relationships that entails obligations to land (Wilmsen 1989b:170). In referring to the 'owner' of the land, the Setswana word '*mong*' is used, or the Bugakhwedam possessive construct *dl ma* (m) or *dl sa* (f). Ownership was ascribed to a living member of the family group (only one of whom in this case - Taetso - was a woman), as Silberbauer (1981) reported of G//ana in central Kalahari. These owners themselves, however, often referred to their land as belonging to relatives of their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents generation. Moving through their land provided a continued link with these ancestors through the opportunity of asking for their assistance and protection. For example, as we camped in their land, Amos gave a mug of water to his older classificatory cousin Sangando, and told him to *phekola* (bless) the land. Sangando sprinkled the water around him, saying:

> *//Gãwa //gawe ya//e //e ngiyae tshaa a //ao da oro ke //ao tuwoko tshaa /we/we. /Ao tee ngu hĩ //ao ko xo /ũ ko. Tee hĩ ngu o. //Ee //eu ko //we uu //e yoo xa ka kũ, rrrrrrr rrrrrrr. Sekundeko, Puduhudu.*
>
> (Our ancestors, come. We are going to bless the water in your waterhole from which we drink, let the rain fall and fill this waterhole. We are now in your land, the one in which you ate. We are in your land. Go with us and look after us tomorrow. rrrrrr rrrrrr. Sekundeko [Sangando's classificatory uncle], Puduhudu [Sangando's father]).

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[21] The word *n≠aa* is also used to refer to a place or area, but is not used in a possessive sense. *Xom* (literally meaning 'soil') can be possessive, but is not commonly used to refer to family lands (I am grateful to Matthias Brenzinger for a discussion on this topic).

In their time, these ancestors would have been described as *≠uukao* (*≠uu* – to gather/collect, *kao* – plenty), or */x'ũngyeu* (*/x'ũ* – kill, *ngyeu* – young man), referring to their role as outstanding providers for their people. With regard to their capacity as leaders, most Basarwa would stop short of calling them *//axa* (chief), a form of authority generally owned by Batawana, and those on whom they chose to bestow it. They instead referred to leaders of each family as *di xa ngu a* (owner of the land), or *di xa //'ae a* (owner of the village). These people had a relationship to their land referred to by the verb *//'ae* in Bugakhwedam, and *oõ* in Ts'exadam. The closest translation is the Setswana term *go rua*, literally meaning to possess, but with the implication of benefiting from the productive nature of what is owned. If one moved away and stopped using the productive assets of a particular tract of land, title to it was lost, and it was free to be taken over by another family group.

Boundaries between family lands were, and are, not without contestation. Perhaps disagreement is intrinsic to territorial claims, and has certainly been common in other Basarwa claims to land (e.g. Heinz 1994:94 for !Xõ, Lee 1979:334 for Ju/'hoansi). Bugakhwe today say that such disagreements in the distant past sometimes became violent. Even as we mapped their areas, arguments arose in adjoining areas as to which land was whose. The boundaries between territories were often imprecise (cf. Lee 1979:334-5), and sometimes overlapped. At other times, clear topographical features functioned as borders, such as elephant paths (*oo dao*) or fossil riverbeds. Such boundaries, however, were not presented as lines of separation, but lines of meeting. The Setswana word used to refer to them was *mokopano*, meaning 'place of meeting', rather than the more common term *kgaolo* ('district'), from the verb *go kgaola* ('to divide/separate'). Important resource areas along these boundaries, such as waterholes and fruit collecting areas were shared (a common attribute of Basarwa territories; see Barnard 1992a:235), and neighbours would sometimes move together for a period at such places. These physical 'boundaries' were thus - as Barth (1969, 1996) argued of social boundaries - places of social *connection*; spaces for the construction of relationships rather than places of separation.

Water was paramount in figuring patterns of land ownership. Virtually without exception, all the names in the land are of waterholes, with surrounding features (smaller waterholes, sandveld, fruit groves, etc.) taking their name from the nearest large waterhole. Each family territory bordered a supply of permanent water, either the lagoons and floodplains of the Okavango and Kwando/Linyanti river systems, or the permanent groundwater of Dishokora, also known by its Bugakhwedam name, ***Bien/wã***. Situated in one of the east-west valleys just south of the Caprivi border, Dishokora was the meeting point of about five different family

lands; the centre from which the 'petals' of territories radiated, giving each one access to its water (see Appendix Five). It was a place of congregation when all the other waterholes in their land had dried up. Ex-residents speak of it having been an extensive and permanent water source, and this is corroborated by a map made by Percy Reid (1901) as he travelled up the Kwando River in the dry season of 1899, which marks it as a 'large marsh'. Dishokora is now a cattle post with a hand dug well. In May 1998, it supported 394 cattle (Plate 3.3), 281 of which belonged to a Mokgalagadi from Shakawe and the rest to eight //Anikhwe from Ngarange. The only Bugakhwe there were several young men, paid to look after the cattle, under the antiquated system of a cow per year for their labour.

Early commentators in Ngamiland were struck by the high degree of exclusivity that marked Basarwa territories. 'No Mokuba [Moyei] or River Mosarwa is allowed by his neighbours to poach outside his own district', wrote Stigand (1923), and Dornan (1925:85) observed that, 'each family group had its own hunting ground and bitterly resented the intrusion of others, either native or European'. As these comments imply, what was guarded was not so much the land itself, but the useful resources on it, which included waterholes (or lagoons in the swampland), gathering areas, honey and wildlife. As with G//ana in central Kalahari (Cashdan 1984:447-9) and Tyua in northeastern Kalahari (Hitchcock 1995:177) some of these resources could also be individually owned. These could include dispersed resources such as melon groves, or specific point resources, such as an anthill that Amos pointed south of N/omn/om which belonged to his father. Using the resources of another's territory was possible if permission was sought and granted, which it often was, especially for water. 'Water is never refused' I was told, indicating that it was so essential that it had to be held loosely and shared with anyone who, if necessary, would go through the formality of asking. Less essential resources, such as groves of fruit or nuts, or honey were often more exclusively held. Informants today maintain that individuals who asked such permission, whether Basarwa or Bantu, were accompanied by a member of the family who owned the land to ensure there was no abuse, such as hunting juvenile animals, picking unripe fruit, or over-harvesting. Such practices are termed */'ae ũ* (*/'ae* – destructive, *ũ* - hunt[ing]), and individuals who made this a habit were denied continued access to these resources. Both Basarwa and Bayei informants stated that, in the distant past, Bayei and other (unrelated) Basarwa found hunting or gathering without permission could be beaten or killed (cf. Schapera 1930:155-9). While specific localities belonged to specific families, kinship ties created larger 'clusters' of territories into which access was guaranteed for members, and a united front could be presented against incursions. Dornan (1925:85) was told that '[Basarwa] clans combined in former times to

resist other tribes who threatened their control of land'. Such rigid control, however, began to decline with the immigration of Bantu-speakers.

Immigration and the decline of tenure

The entry of different waves of Bantu-speaking immigrants into Ngamiland from about 1700 marked the beginning of the end of the strong controls over land by Basarwa described by the likes of Dornan. This was a common fate of Basarwa land tenure systems throughout southern Africa, documented, for example, by Heinz (1994:94) of !Xõ land tenure, once their land became an important cattle trek route. In the eyes of many Basarwa, this was the beginning of a single continuous process of gradual land alienation that has continued until today, thus affecting perceptions of current programmes, like CBNRM, that touch upon issues of resource tenure. Take, for example, the impassioned account of changes in land tenure given to me by Petros, an old blind man from Khwai (which I have edited into chronological order):

> Long ago, if people wanted to hunt in my [ancestors'] area, they came and asked first. We told them not to finish the animals, but to take a few then go back home... . When Bayei came into our land, we showed them our animals, but they started finishing them. So we refused to let them hunt anymore in our area, to finish off the few animals that were left. They generally respected us, but sometimes they came to steal in secret. If we found a Moyei, we would beat him with sticks so that he wouldn't come back, then let him go... . When blacks came into our land, they asked for land to keep their cattle in. We showed them and they kept it... Batawana came and took our land and animals without asking. In the past we Basarwa had no chiefs. Batawana were our chiefs. They let us keep our food [i.e. access to land and wildlife], they just said they would eat it too, not like the government [of today] that has taken them away altogether. Our chief Seretse [Khama] gave us all a number of animals [through Special Game Licenses], he looked after us. Today all our land and all our food has been kidnapped by the government, without thought for how we will live and stand up. Today the government has struck us down.

Many of the initial Bantu immigrants into the northern sandveld, particularly Bayei, arrived via the waterways of the Okavango-Linyanti-Kwando system (Tlou 1985:15). The immigrants lived along the waterways in semi-permanent villages with summer sites and winter sites, to avoid the annual floods. //Anikhwe, who also lived along the riverine fringes,[22] most felt the impact of immigration. In contrast, Bugakhwe at Gudigwa maintain that their preferred residence has always been the sandveld. Both Gibbons (1904:207) and Seiner (1909) confirmed this pattern, with their observations that the sandveld from Okavango to

[22] Both Gibbons (1904) and Seiner (1909), who travelled along the northern rivers in 1899 and 1905-6 respectively, noted that many of the small villages along the Okavango River were //Anikhwe.

Kwando was the domain of Basarwa.[23] Like Ju/'hoansi in western Ngamiland (Lee 1965:198) and //Ganakhwe near the Boteti (Cashdan 1986), Bugakhwe spent the wet season dispersed in the sandveld, and moved to permanent water sources (springs or rivers) in the dry season. For some Bugakhwe groups, Dishokora was the point at which they congregated (which by 1900 had Hambukushu living at it), for others it was along the riverine fringes. Villages along the rivers provided an opportunity to trade; skins, honey, meat and wild fruit in return for tobacco, cannabis, agricultural produce, pots and iron. In many respects, therefore, the relationship between Bugakhwe in the sandveld, and their Bantu neighbours along the rivers, was initially mutually beneficial.

By the time of the first census of Ngamiland in 1921, the riverine fringes around the northern sandveld were scattered with villages. The census estimated 1,500-2,000 Hambukushu lived down the eastern bank of the Okavango from Mohembo to Gabamukuni, most likely an underestimate considering the difficulty of access (Stigand 1923:412). By this time, however, northern Ngamiland was a mix of not only Hambukushu, but also Bayei, Bakgalagadi, Basubia, Banajwa, and, of course, Bugakhwe and //Anikhwe. The largest settlement was Gabamukuni itself. Situated in the middle of the northern arm of the Delta, it was a cosmopolitan cluster of villages where Bayei, Hambukushu, Bakgalagadi and Bugakhwe lived in close proximity. Stigand (1923) referred at the beginning of the century to 'Kabamokoni' as 'most thickly inhabited with a large number of little Mampukushu and Makuba [Bayei] villages'. Hambukushu and Bayei villages also sprung up along the southern banks of the Kwando and Linyanti. The largest of these was Sekeletu's, on the southeastern edge of Linyanti. It was visited by Livingstone in 1850, who recorded that he exacted tribute from many surrounding tribes. There were strings of smaller villages as well along Kwando and Linyanti, where a 1934 census enumerated 474 Bayei and Hambukushu (including nine Batawana) in 14 villages (BNA 1934).

One of the main determinants of settlement was the changing distribution of tsetse fly. Tsetse infestation in the northern sandveld receded to riverine pockets in the 1880s, but once it recovered from the rinderpest epizootic of 1897 that had decimated its main carriers (cattle and wildlife) it began spreading again. By the 1940s it covered virtually the whole of the Okavango and Kwando-Linyanti, as well as peripheral savanna areas. Since then, it has waxed and waned, largely subject to attempts to control it by the colonial and post-colonial governments (Davies 1980). Tsetse was the main cause of the decline of Gabamukuni, as well as the villages along the southern edges of Kwando and Linyanti. The Kwando and Linyanti

[23] On the map he produced of his travels, Seiner (1909) labelled the northern sandveld *Hukwe-Veld.*

villages were moved by the Protectorate government, between 1935 and 1941, to Gabamukuni and Caprivi, in an attempt to depopulate the worst areas of tsetse infestation.[24] The non-Basarwa residents of the Gabamukuni area also started to move away of their own accord in the same period, mostly to the northern and southeastern edges of the Delta.

The influx of Bantu-speaking immigrants did not at first substantially change the spatial layout of existing territories (as Wiley 1974:18 noted for Basarwa in the Kgalagadi District). Basarwa continued to adhere to these, and a patchwork of tenure arrangements grew, forming a complex sets of overlapping rights. Areas were delineated that were open access and uncontested, others that were managed to restrict access to some degree, and yet others that were effectively private (cf. Scoones 1995). As Bantu-speakers became more established, their rights along the rivers superseded those of Basarwa. Nonetheless, principally by virtue of their intimate knowledge of the sandveld, the strength of Basarwa tenure in the sandveld was not so easily eroded. Even the Batawana chiefs, who claimed the entire sandveld as their own hunting grounds, would hunt in conjunction with the Basarwa owners of the land they were hunting in. In part this was a logistical necessity; people unfamiliar with its repetitive terrain could easily die of thirst. But it was also recognition of their unique form of power as first people in the land, a supernatural power ascribed to occupying a liminal state between society and nature (cf. Gordon 1992:212-5). Batawana hunters (according to Basarwa informants) would ask Basarwa owners of the land they were hunting in to bless or charm (*phekola*) them to ensure their success, in the same way that Sangando did for himself and his companions as we mapped his land.

Despite being able to maintain control over sections of the sandveld (especially those with no permanent water sources) there were times of crisis, when Basarwa were forced to enter servitude in order to survive. When Reid (1901) travelled along the Kwando in 1899, he described the Basarwa he encountered living with Hambukushu as 'the lowest of the low'. Perhaps in the wake of the rinderpest epizootic of 1897, the vulnerability of some Basarwa as they lost the relative independence afforded by the sandveld, was taken advantage of by their non-Basarwa neighbours. Through such experiences, and with the rise in political power of Batawana and select subject tribes, the patchwork of overlapping rights gradually tipped out of the favour of Basarwa, to the extent that practices such as asking permission to hunt in

[24] Other villages in tsetse areas around the Delta were not moved, indicating that perhaps the removal of Kwando and Linyanti villages was more a function of the District Commissioner's prejudice that they were 'a lazy, dirty and good for nothing community of people' (BNA1940).

another's territory, fell away. Speaking of this later period (into the twentieth century), Mojeremane, an elderly man from Khwai, explained:

> Outsiders did not ask first to hunt or gather. If we found someone hunting, we would ask for meat but not ask him where he was from or what he was doing. Basarwa were not jealous. If they saw someone hunting, they left them because they were also people who needed food. We say the land [as a whole] is ours because we have named it, showing it was all our land. Mosarwa... knew the land. He welcomed others into the land and showed them around, but then they started being in charge.

Despite conveying a much looser sense of territoriality that was characteristic of this later period, Mojeremane's description carries the same ultimate theme as the earlier account of resource tenure by Petros; dispossession. To Basarwa in the northern sandveld, the enduring consequence of Bantu immigration was dispossession; from their land, their resources, and often their labour.

Contemporary attitudes to historical territories

Basarwa live today in the northern sandveld in a very different context than that which gave rise to the pattern of family territories which we constructed as we mapped their land. Demographically, the most important change is that they now live in one single village, rather than each in their own family's territory. As such, there has been a corresponding shift from emphasising the ownership of individual families, to a more inclusive sense of ownership of the land as a whole, by the village as a whole. These two levels of locally figuring ownership; on a family as well as a village-wide basis, overlap. Most people are familiar with, and use, both. However, the middle aged and elderly people who had life experience in these lands, were often those most keen to emphasise family territories. They spoke with fondness of the land that they called their own, reflected in Amos' comment as we walked around the remains of his village at Ndyabe/xamtsha: 'I love this land. It is beautiful when it rains. I would return to it if there were water'.

The gradual agglomeration of Bugakhwe at Letshaobe and //Gam/wi, and then at Gudigwa from 1988, was due to a variety of factors. The lower than average rainfall in the past three decades made reliable supplies of water harder and harder to find. This was coupled with promises by the Remote Area Development programme that, if they congregated in one place, they would receive essential services; water, a health post and a primary school.[25] Although no one was forced to move to Gudigwa, some families alleged that harassment by the Anti

[25] Ten years later, however, the one of these they had received was a regular supply of water (Plate 4.6).

Poaching Unit of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) left them with little choice. For example, Two-Boy's land lay between Gudigwa and Khwai, now in a CHA leased by the government directly to a tourism operator. He explained to me one day, as we sat in the hunting lodge where he worked as a tracker, how he had ended up moving from Four Rivers to Gudigwa:

> Ian Khama [head of the BDF] came to my house and asked for me, saying that the soldiers would end up shooting me, as they said I was harassing the animals. But I thought, 'If I am harassing them, why are they still around?' Nonetheless, I broke my village and moved to Gudigwa.
>
> Today we give ourselves nothing, living instead at the hands of white people. I didn't want to fight with the soldiers because I am illiterate and don't know how to protect myself, or my younger brothers and children who were with me. If they had not harassed me, I would still be there. I want assurance from the government that I will not be harassed, and I will return there.
>
> Today we can only live by honey, a bit of work, and kills from predators. The government has robbed us. As a Mosarwa, I am the owner of the wildlife. The government has raped us. Hambukushu and Bayei were given sorghum, but Khara/'uma was given animals to look after. The land is my inheritance. If I had the choice, I would send my children to hunt for me. But today the government has kidnapped the wildlife, and if we try to hunt we go to jail.

Like Amos and Two-Boy, most of the residents of Gudigwa continued to hold an attachment to the land they still considered their own. Yet even Amos and Two-Boy realised, despite their sentiments, that they were unlikely to ever live in their family territories again. The new set of official principles, priorities and laws over land, settlement and wildlife make agglomeration in villages a virtually irreversible process. Although none of Gudigwa's ancestral lands fall within land zoned as national parks or game reserves, much of it is zoned as Wildlife Management Areas, which restrict the growth of 'new' settlements. As Brown, a young member of Khwai's Interim Management Committee, told me, 'If you want to move, you can move to an existing settlement, but not out into the bush. The bush is for wildlife'.

Two-Boy's response to the restrictions imposed by the government were aimed at legitimating continued claim over 'his' land, as well as making a more generalised claim over the land as a whole and wildlife in it ('As a Mosarwa, I am the owner of the wildlife... Khara/'uma was given animals to look after. The land is my inheritance'). It is this generalised claim of land ownership that is preferred by the younger people, who, although they are often familiar with the boundaries of their family territories, have a life experience

more rooted in the contemporary dynamics of living in a single village. One such person was Starvation, a younger member of both the Okavango Community Trust committee, and the newly formed 'Masarwa Community' committee. He was of the opinion that, 'Those who say different areas belong to different people are *ba bogologolo* [of the old ways], the whole land belongs to me [as a Mosarwa]'. Reflecting a similar sentiment, a young Ju/'hoan man in the Omaheke farms, Namibia, stated: 'My ***n!ore*** is the world, this world, this Kaukauveld, this Omaheke' (Suzman 1997:90). Such notions by Basarwa of land and their place in it also reflect the position that they have come to occupy in an overarching political economy, that encompasses both them and their land, transcending the social and spatial boundaries of individual family territories.

By the late 1990s, the boundaries between family territories of Gudigwa received little more than lip service, seen, for example, in Amos' complements to Taetso for allowing, without complaint, the whole village of Gudigwa to live on her land. In practice, residents of Gudigwa hunted, grazed their cattle, and used the veld with no restraints to stick to specific band territories. The boundaries of family lands had been overtaken by the more recent boundaries imposed by the government. When I asked Ts'ima, the headman of Gudigwa who had lived and hunted throughout the northern sandveld, about hunting in another's territory, he responded, 'We didn't ask each other's permission to hunt. We just used each other's areas freely because we are relatives. It is the government that makes us ask to go places.' It is to these government-imposed boundaries that I now turn, through the experiences of Khwai and Mababe.

Khwai

Like the residents of Gudigwa, the people of Khwai call themselves Bugakhwe. The dialect that they speak has slight phonetic differences, indicative of the increasing geographical distance between them and their relatives in Gudigwa over the past few generations. They are nicknamed ***Ma-dzikidza*** by their relatives in Gudigwa, after the tall peri-swamp mophane (Colophospermum mopane) woodland, characteristic of the Delta fringe (Plate 2.2). Their land was the southeastern-most of the Gudigwa cluster, so, unlike most of their relatives, they lived a life more commonly associated with the northern waterways and floodplains of the Delta than in its sandveld hinterland. From the mid-nineteenth century, the Gabamukuni area where they lived became increasingly populated by immigrants, some of whom forced Khwai's ancestors into servitude. As a result, from around the end of the nineteenth century, they began moving eastwards, along the northern fringe of the Delta.

The northeastern fringe of the delta along the Khwai River has been the least populated stretch of the Okavango fringe since Bantu immigration into Ngamiland. Despite the lack of permanent substantial settlements, the area was extensively used by Bugakhwe. From the late nineteenth century, Basubia fleeing Matebele aggression also found refuge in its isolation, some of whom lived at //Xam (which was abandoned in the early 1950s due to the encroachment of tsetse). For non-Basarwa, however, Khwai was more commonly a hunting and gathering ground, rather than an area of permanent settlement. It was an especially important area for Bayei from around Sankuyu, who often joined their Basarwa neighbours on hunting and gathering trips in the winter months, after having harvested their crops. Bayei presence in the land historically has left its mark in some Shiyei place names, such as *Njakamakata* ('relief from famine', indicating the importance of its abundant resources) and *Kanjiye* ('scorpion'). Other Shiyei names have been displaced by Bugakhwedam names, such as that of the lagoon just west of Khwai presently called Segagama. Its previous name, *Sama≠awa,* is only remembered by descendants of Bayei that lived there in the early years of the twentieth century.

Khwai became an important hunting ground for Batawana as well. Selous, who travelled up the 'Machabe [Machaba]' River (as it is known downstream from Khwai) in the winter of 1880 encountered 'a great many Kafir [sic] hunters from Lake Ngami, all of whom told us that there were many of their people ahead' (1893:173). In about 1920, Mathiba, The Motawana chief, with his young son Moremi III, decided to build a kraal at Khwai, the exact site of which is known today as *Mapako a ga Moremi,*[26] which served as a base for Batawana hunting expeditions. It also constituted visible reminder of the presence and authority of the Batawana chieftainship, an authority that previously was more hearsay than a tangible presence in this region. Resident Bugakhwe were often used as guides and porters for the hunters, in return for which they were given meat and the occasional use of a gun. As a product of its comparative isolation, forced labour, of the type typical of the Gabamukuni area and elsewhere, was not as prevalent in Khwai. It was generally limited to porterage for transient Bakgalagadi, who hunted for hippos to sell their hides to white traders for sjamboks. The groups of Basubia and Bayei that either lived in the area, or visited it regularly, generally related to Bugakhwe on a more egalitarian level than either Batawana or Bakgalagadi.

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[26] Meaning 'Moremi's posts', some of which still stand (Plate 3.8). This was the original area known as 'Khwai', while the present site of the village originally carried the name of the nearby lagoon, 'Kanjiye'. Although the lagoon retains its name, the village site is now called 'Khwai'.

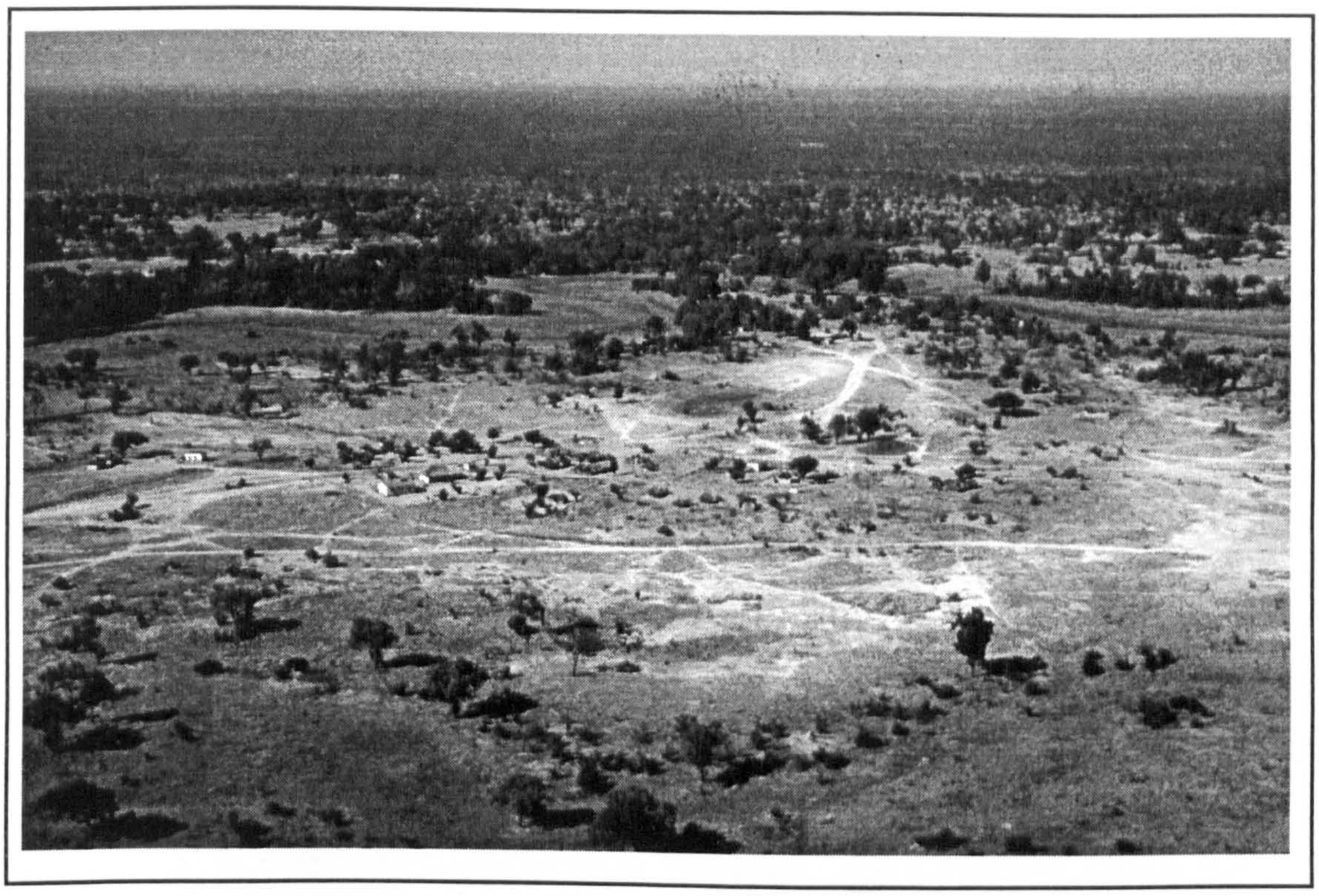


Plate 3.7: Aerial view of Khwai village.

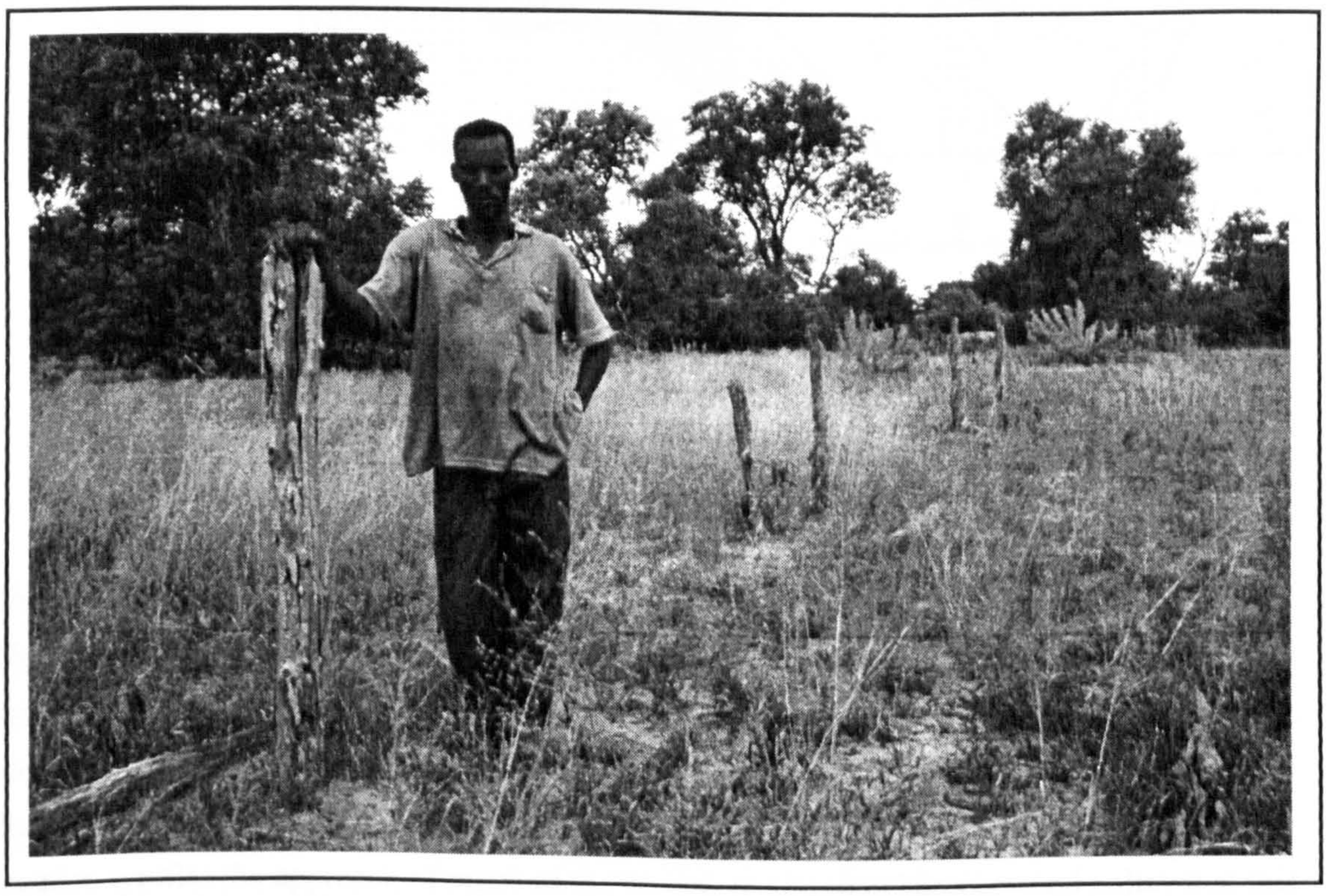
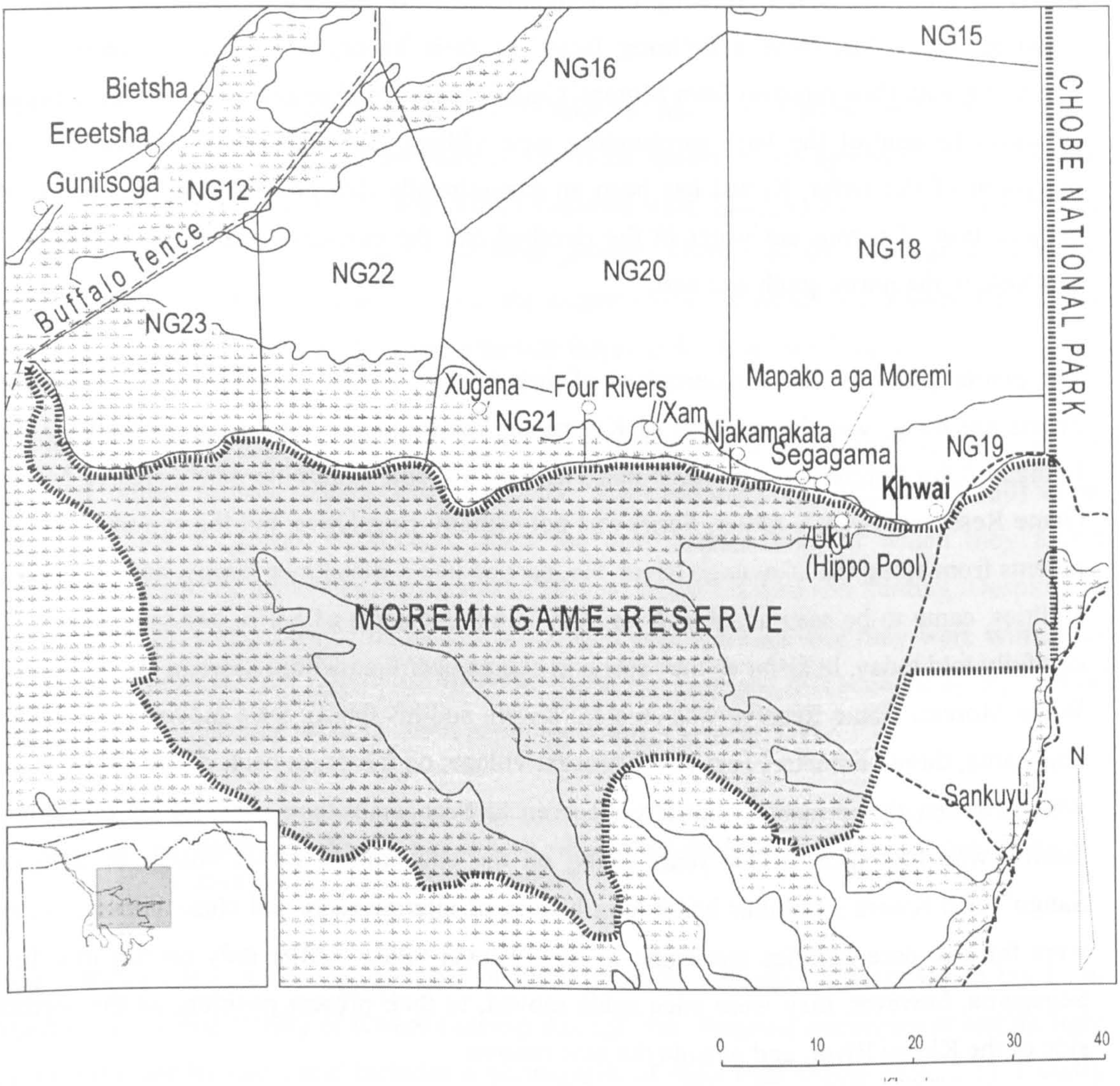


Plate 3.8: *Mapako a ga Moremi*, the old site of chief Moremi's kraal.



Map 3.2: Khwai, Moremi Game Reserve (with extensions) and surrounding areas.

The creation of Moremi Game Reserve

The creation of Moremi Game Reserve, proclaimed on 15th March 1963, is often heralded as mould-breaking for conservation in Africa, in being, to take an example from tourist literature, 'the first Wildlife Sanctuary created by an African tribe, namely the Batawana, in their own area' (Roodt n.d). This rather loose interpretation of the events leading up to its creation typifies the approach of much of the conservation-related practice and policy that this event set in motion; namely that Basarwa have remained largely invisible to those with the

power to make decisions affecting their livelihoods. For Khwai, the struggle to maintain resource tenure has been a defining factor of their history and present circumstances, beginning with their removal from Moremi Game Reserve, and culminating with their present struggles to control the land surrounding their village. Situated at the northeastern-most extension of the Delta, Khwai has been an exceptionally rich area for wildlife, due to the combination of permanent water in the riverbed and the extensive grazing available in the sandveld to the north, south and east.

The pivotal point in Khwai's narratives of their history, around which prior and subsequent events are hung, was the removal of Kwere and his family in 1963 from where they were living at /Uku (referred to on tourist maps as Hippo Pool), within the newly created Moremi Game Reserve. Kwere's father, Seriri was not actually Bugakhwe, but the son of //Anikhwe parents from along the Okavango River. He married into a Bugakhwe family, and, through his abilities, came to be seen as their *di xa //ae*. The movements of Seriri, and later Kwere, are carefully told today, in as far as they relate to claims over land within Moremi Game Reserve. When Moremi Game Reserve was created, Kwere and his family were moved from /Uku to Segagama, three kilometres east of the present village, on the south bank of the Khwai River, which formed the border of the new reserve. At Segagama, they were joined by Sango's family, who had spent a few years living on the edge of the Bayei village of Sankuyu. Sango's and Kwere's families had a long history of intermarriage and close association, and were the two core families that came to form Khwai village. After only several months at Segagama, however, they were once again moved, to their present position, on the northern side of the Khwai River, and outside the new reserve.

Moremi Game Reserve was formed at the instigation of the Fauna Conservation Society (FCS), a group based in Maun with both expatriate and Batswana members. The proposal to create the reserve was presented to the public in a meeting of 10th September 1962, in the Maun *kgotla*, the seat of traditional authority for Ngamiland. In the meeting, FCS stressed the potential for income from tourism as a motivation to preserve its unique wildlife. They justified the choice of proposed area as it was 'little hunted over by the Batawana, the Bayei or the Masarwas' (BNA1962a). The issue of hunting had to be handled delicately in public arenas, considering its widespread importance to residents of Ngamiland, Basarwa and non-Basarwa alike. Privately, the motivation of FCS in proposing a reserve was as much to address the perceived effects of overhunting as to open up its tourism potential. In an internal memorandum, Robert Kay, the main proponent behind the formation of the reserve, wrote that:

> There is no question about the fact there will be no more fauna to speak of on the Kwaai and environs in ten years time if the present rate of shooting, trapping, etc. is allowed to continue unchecked' (BNA 1963).

While the suggestion to create a game reserve may not have come primarily from Batawana themselves, once presented and discussed in the Maun *kgotla,* it was agreed to. Maun *kgotla,* however, was not a political space in which Basarwa were likely to have their voice heard, nor one in which they would even have been present. There was no consultation with the people that lived within the reserve, one of the largest groups of which was Kwere's extended family, but which also included several transient Bayei and //Anikhwe families.

The bitter memory of being removed from Khwai provides a pivot, a seminal event, in the Khwai's tellings of their history. It separates the 'good old days' (cf. Scott 1985:150) when they were free to govern themselves, from the new dispensation, in which they found themselves under the increasing limitations of official edicts on land and hunting. Despite the memories of FCS members involved in relocating Kwere's village that they were willing to move, local memories are somewhat different. Take, for example, this account by a group of middle-aged women in Khwai, in 1997, about their removal from /Uku:

> They [FCS] were not good because they moved us. They burnt our houses, some even with our belongings in. We did not choose where they dumped us. They just poured us out on the ground like you would spill sorghum.

June Vendall-Clark, a founder member of FCS, gives an evocative description in her book *Starlings Laughing* (1990) of Kwere running through the 'deserted encampment setting light to the huts one by one', and includes a photograph of their huts ablaze (Fig. 3.1). Exactly what happened remains unclear, but the differences in narratives of this seminal event reflect that collective memories are often tropes rather than facts. They therefore speak of shared *present* experience, as much as historical events. For the residents of Khwai, the most important present experience in this respect has been, once again, the threat of their removal. Throughout much of the 1990s, various government officials visited Khwai informing them that Khwai is a 'wildlife area', and they would thus have to move. While the pressure to move continues from some government officials, it has been a pressure that Khwai has so far succeeded in resisting.

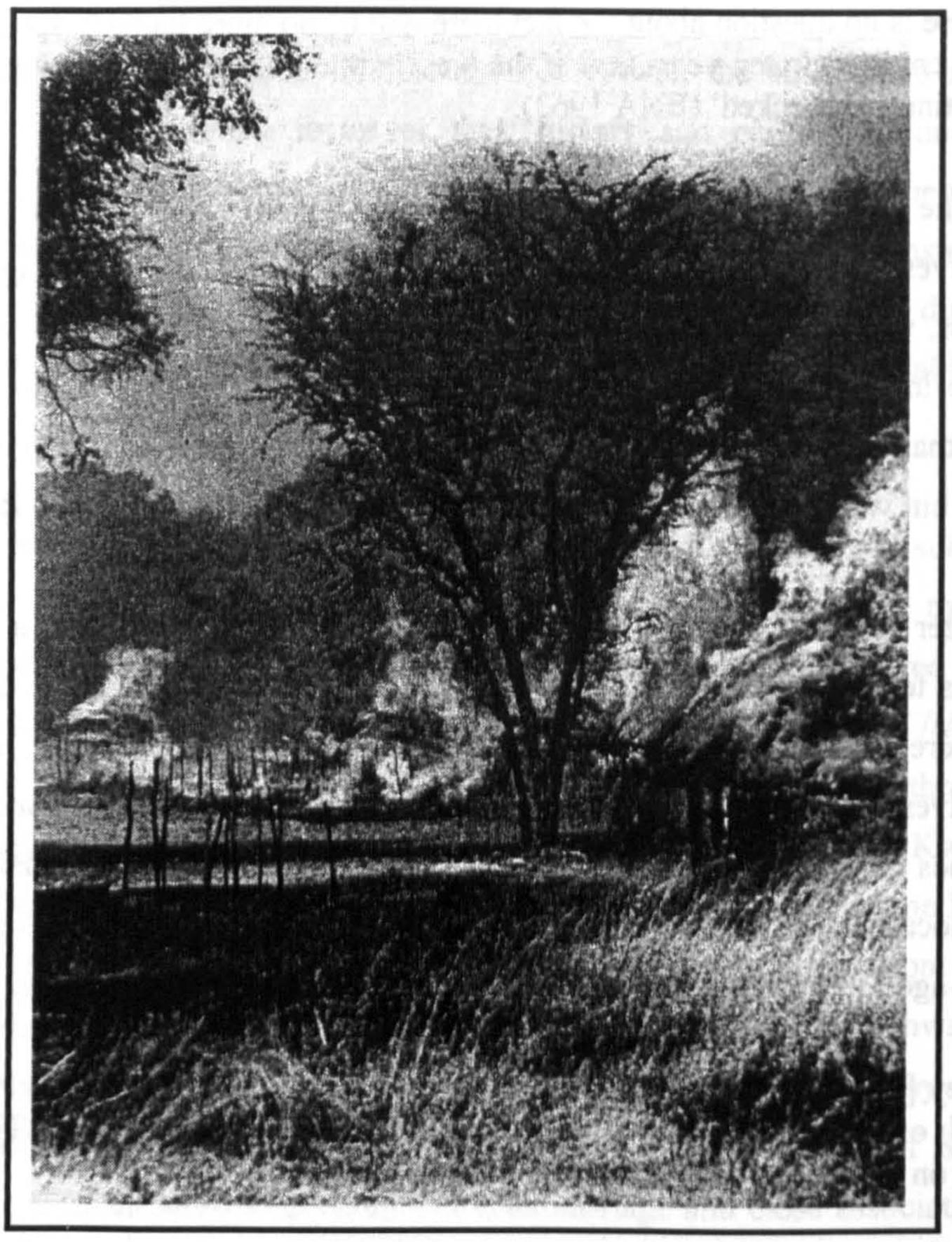


Figure 3.1: Kwere's village at /Uku burning (reproduced with permission from June Vendall-Clark).

Mababe

The compact village of Mababe - the third of the trio of Basarwa villages in the northern sandveld - lies on a sand rise south of the Mababe Depression, two kilometres east of the corridor that was created in 1980 to link Moremi Game Reserve with Chobe National Park (Map 3.3). Like Khwai and Gudigwa, the village of Mababe is unmarked on most Department of Surveys and Lands maps, but unlike them, it has existed (for at least some months of the year) in the vicinity of its present position since the nineteenth century.

Situated on the main route between Khama's country in the south, and the expanding Lozi kingdom to the north, Mababe was a comparative hub of activity in the nineteenth century. It was a cosmopolitan collection of different people attracted by abundance of wild food, and by the lack of turmoil that characterised much of southern Africa. Immigrants included Manajwa

refugees fleeing Matebele expansion in their homeland (Nettleton 1934:356), Basubia who had moved down from Chobe, and Bayei who were scattered around the flats by the beginning of the nineteenth century (ibid:357). Livingstone passed through Mababe in 1850 on his way to Chobe, encountering Bayei and Basarwa living together, as well as a Basubia village on the southeast edge of the depression (Livingstone1857:69). He noted that the Basubia did not cultivate sorghum, but were reliant on wild *tsitla* (Bulrush, Typha capensis), indicating a fairly close association with Basarwa lifestyles. He was impressed with the constitution of Basarwa around Mababe, commenting that, 'the Bushmen of these districts are generally fine, well-made men, and are nearly independent of everyone… . From the quantities of berries and abundance of game in these parts, the Bushmen can scarcely ever be badly off for food' (ibid:149).

The abundance of wildlife in Mababe was also an attraction to hunters from elsewhere. In the early nineteenth century, Mababe was regarded as the hunting grounds of Bangwato (BNA 1962b), but by the end of the century it was claimed by Batawana chief Sekgoma as his hunting area, where he hunted elephants (Passarge 1997 [1905]:258). The illustrious white hunter, Courtney Selous passed through Mababe twice, as he travelled north to Chobe. He was first taken in 1879 by Collinson and French who had already taken advantage of its rich hunting grounds. Selous returned to Mababe in 1884 and camped for over a month while he hunted, assisted by Basarwa 'eager to receive a share of the meat' (Selous 1893:141-3). Like Livingstone, Selous commented on the close relationship between Bayei and Basubia with Basarwa at Mababe. In 1906, the Resident Commissioner deemed Mababe worthy of a visit, and noted that its residents had 'a more or less imperfect knowledge of Sechuana [Setswana]' (BNA 1906a), evidence of the frequency of visits by Batawana hunters.

Just as Seriri and Kwere came to fulfil the role of leaders in Khwai through their articulation with figures of external authority, sustained contact with Batawana hunters, white travellers, traders and administrators, who used these leaders as guides and porters, promoted the emergence of leaders from among the Ts'exa. These leaders were later to represent the views of their people to the colonial and postcolonial administrations. The extended period of acting in these roles meant that leadership of the Ts'exa became comparatively developed. Unlike many other Basarwa, whose knowledge of lateral kin is often more comprehensive than that of ascending generations, the present headman of Mababe, Kebuelemang, could trace his lineage back four generations (Fig. 3.2). Like Seriri, Kebuelemang's great-great grandfather, //Xudzobe, was not originally from the area that his descendants came to inhabit. He was

Danisani (who speak a related central Khwe language) from near Gweta, 200 kilometres south east of Mababe.

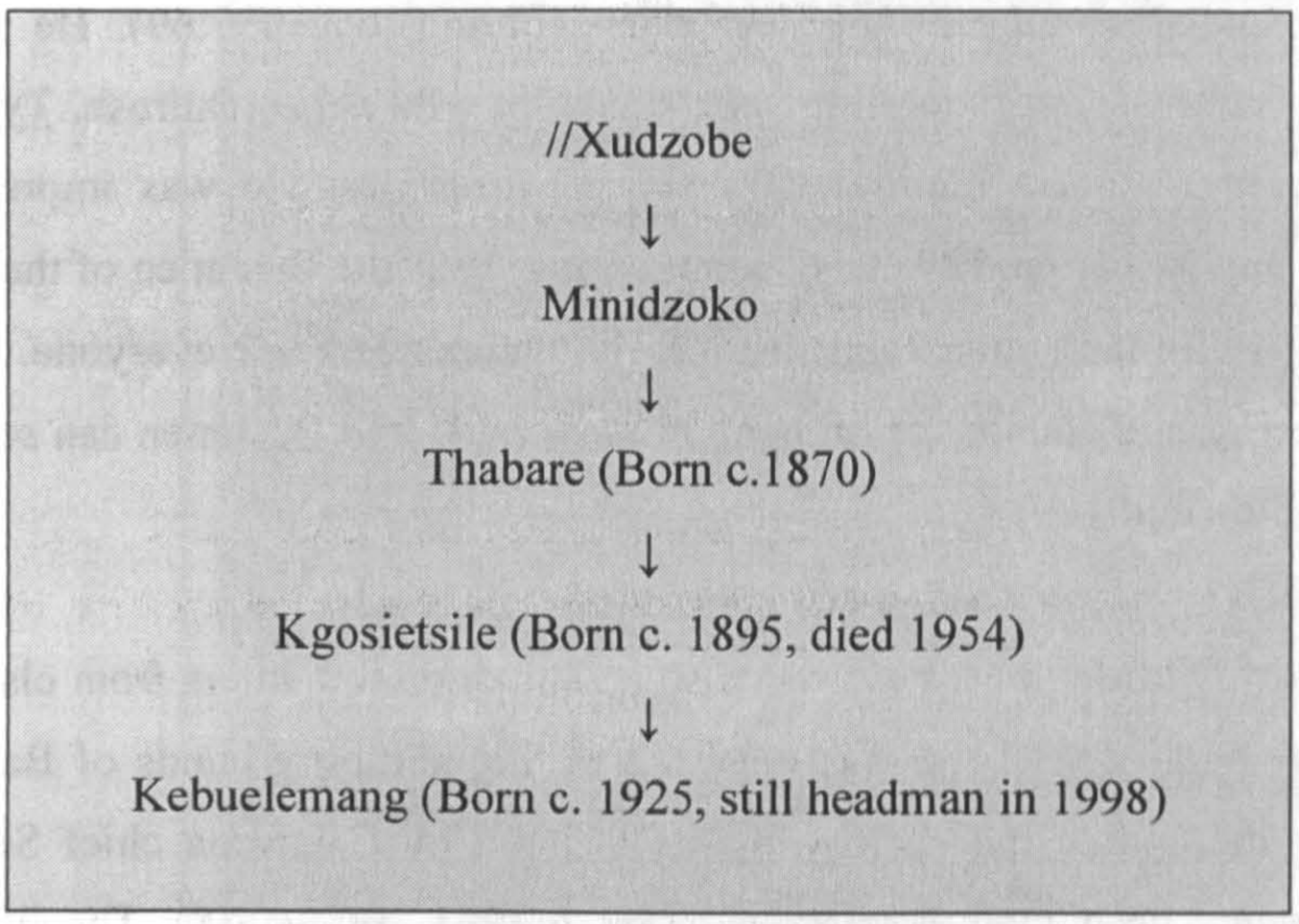


Figure 3.2: Lineage of Kebuelemang, Mababe's headman.

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the decline in trade for animal products reduced the importance of Mababe as a destination for white hunters, prompting the Resident Commissioner to write in 1906 (BNA 1906b) that:

> Curiously enough, the Mababe country which was so well known in the old days and was hunted both on horseback and on foot by Selous and others is now practically untravelled by white men.

The decline in the hunting industry coincided with the rise of Ngamiland's cattle industry, which began in the early 1900s. Initially these cattle were driven south through Rakops to Bangwato, but in 1924, Riley, one of the Maun traders, cut a trek route from Maun, through Mababe, to Kazangula to tap the export market to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia). Cattle that traders in Maun accumulated, along with others from as far afield as South West Africa and the new Ghanzi farms (Holly 1993:102), were trekked along this route to Livingstone, from where they were taken as far as the mines of the Copperbelt and Katanga. In the 1930s, one of these traders, Pretorius, employed a number of the residents of Mababe to keep some of his cattle, but the persistence of predators made this a short-lived exercise.

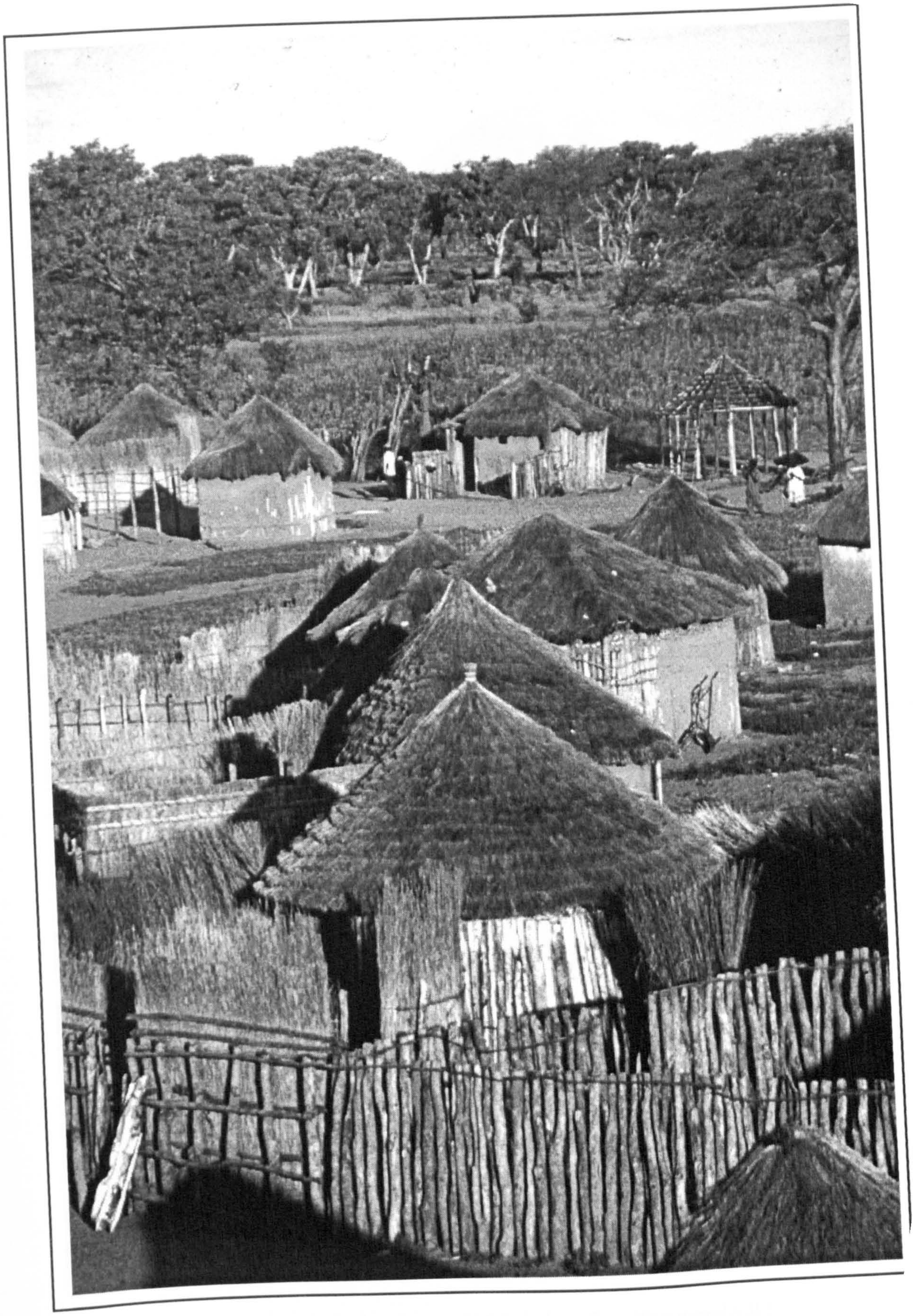


Plate 3.9: Mababe village.

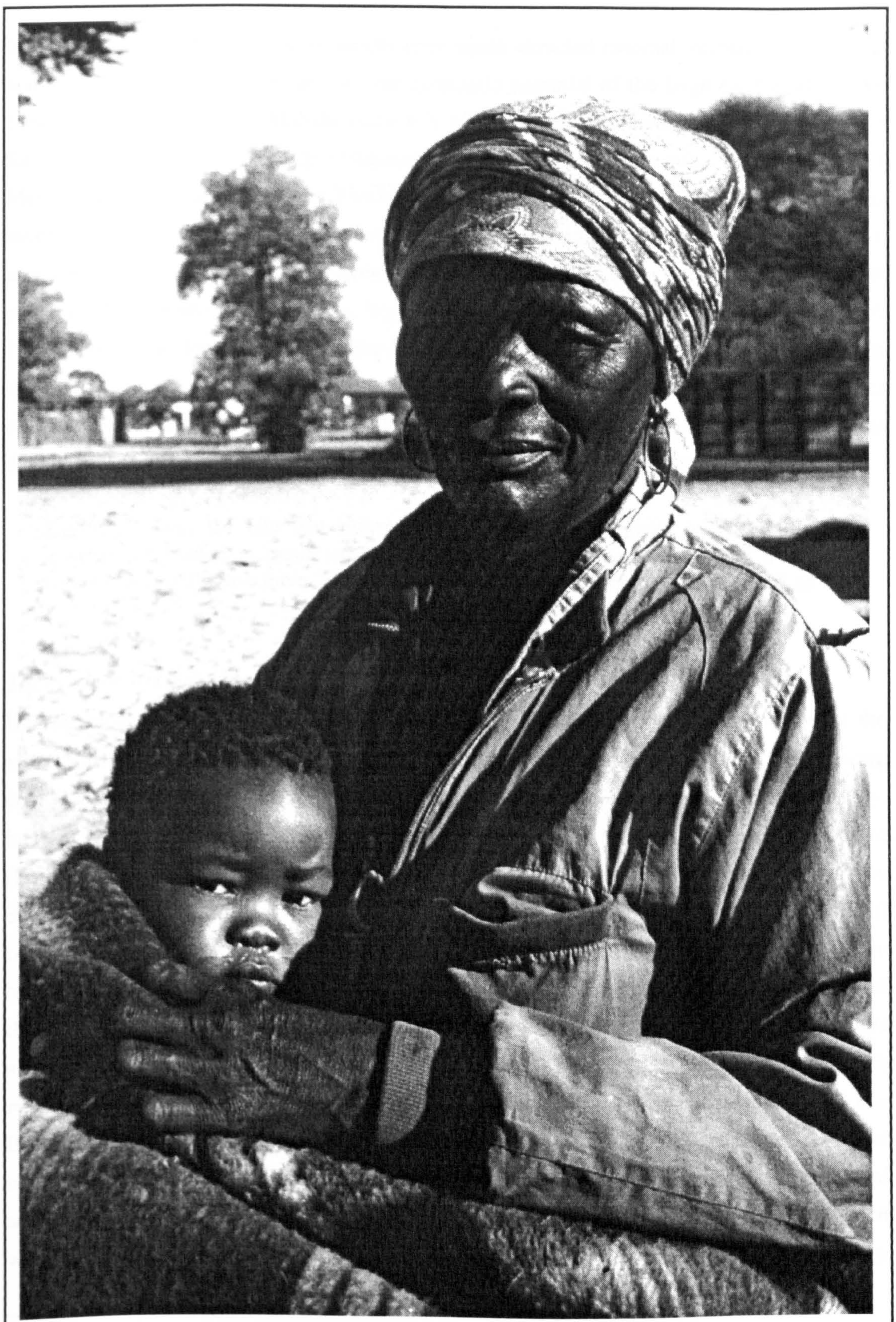


Plate 3.10: Mma Kgosi, the headman of Mababe's wife, with a grandchild.

In the 1940s, Mababe's natural resources once again attracted external interest. This time, it was from colonial officers eyeing out the economic potential of the large swathe of Crown Land which stretched from Mababe eastwards and northwards to the border.[27] A. Sillery, the Resident Commissioner, drew up a proposal to convert 12,000 square miles of this land, from Mababe to Pandamatenga on the Rhodesian border, to ranching and plantation operations involving sisal, vegetable ivory, cereals, nuts, a piggery and an abattoir. He submitted an application for £15,000 to the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to cover the first phase of the operation. Nonetheless, his scheme to help 'the peasants of the Delta' (BNA 1948) was denied funding, and collapsed. However, this was only after he had in 1948 – in anticipation of the scheme's success – requested Kgosietsile and his people to move their village from Mababe to Nxaraga, 180 kilometres away. Mma Kgosi (Plate 3.10), his daughter-in-law and wife to the present headman, related their response thus:

> Kgosietsile was the one that refused to allow us to be moved to Nxaraga. The government wanted to move us, but he said if you take these stones and trees and waterholes, I will move there. The government could not say anything, so they left us'.

The creation of Chobe National Park

Having successfully resisted removal, the residents of Mababe were unable to prevent the alienation of land that gathered pace in the following decade, spurred by the growing conservation movement. Although Bechuanaland's Resident Commissioner, Sir Charles Rey, had attempted to form a game reserve in Chobe in the 1930s, his plans had come to nothing (Spinage 1991:55-7). However, by the late 1950s concern was again expressed over the declining wildlife numbers around Chobe, which the Divisional Commissioner (North) blamed on 'the slaughter of game by Bushmen' (BNA1959a). Hunting laws up to that time had been fairly lax. Tribal authorities regulated hunting in the tribal reserves, such as that of the Batawana which in 1910 prohibited hunting of elephant, giraffe, eland, buffalo, rhinoceros and hippopotamus without permission from the chief (Spinage 1991:10). However, such regulations were very difficult to enforce in the remoter areas, where most Basarwa lived. The Basarwa at Mababe lived mostly on Crown Land, which fell under the colonial administration, rather than the Batawana tribal authority. The policy of the colonial administration on the Chobe Crown Lands up to 1960 had been to restrict wildlife use, which was monitored along the Chobe River between Kazangula and Katchikau. Nonetheless, they

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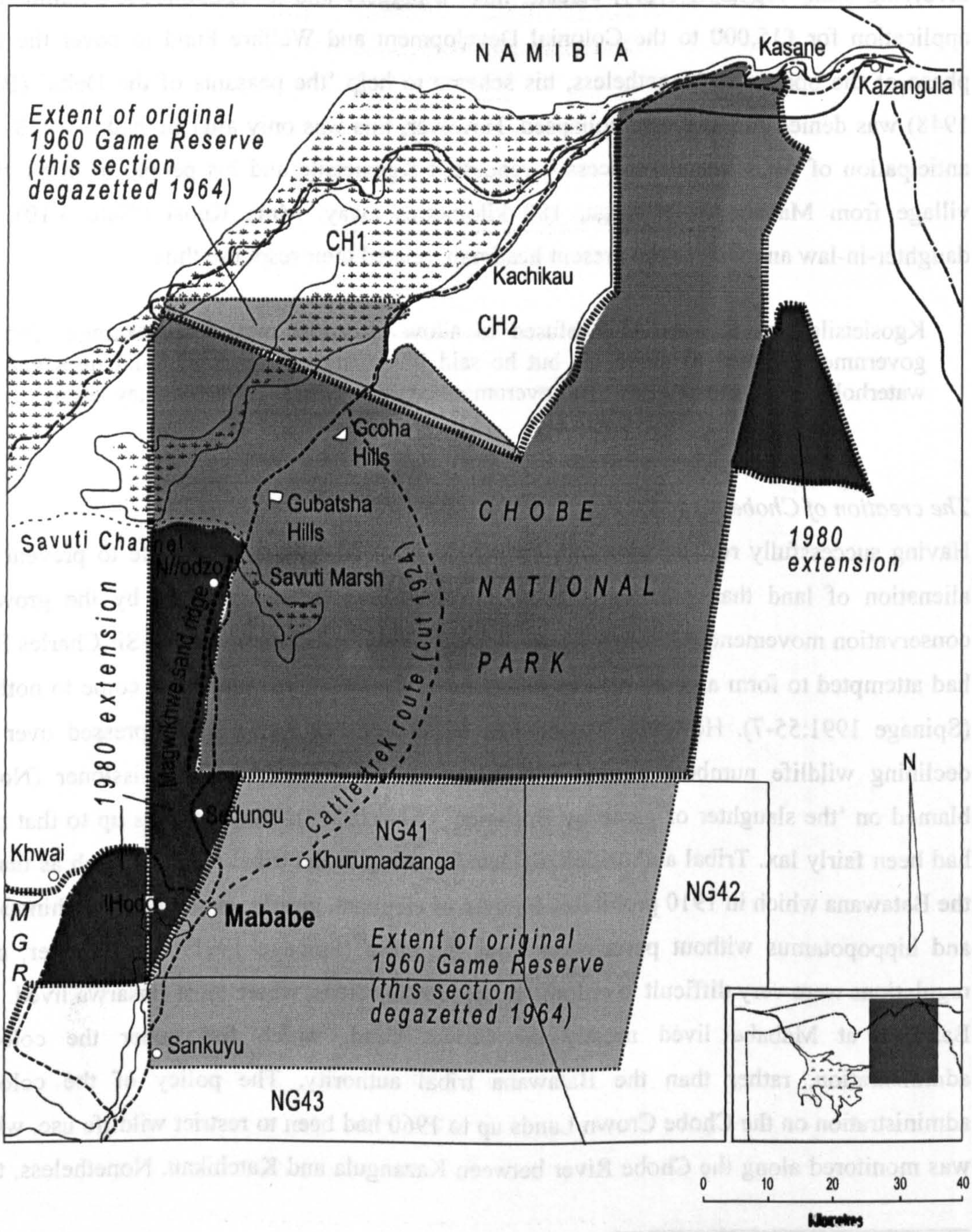
[27] Lands designated as Crown Land (known as State Land after independence) were generally those considered devoid of people to whom it could be allocated as tribal land. It was thus under the direct control of the government, evidence again of the frequent invisibility of Basarwa to administrators and policy makers.

'allowed indigenous Africans further westwards to be left alone as long as they did not kill elephant, rhinoceros, giraffe, hippopotamus and sable' (BNA 1959b).



Map 3.3: Mababe and the various phases of Chobe National Park.

The administration's increasing concern with citizen hunting led to a 15,400 square kilometres stretch of the Chobe Crown Lands being gazetted as a game reserve in 1960, which incorporated the villages of Mababe and Sankuyu. By this time, only the Ts'exa remained at the Mababe Depression, the Bayei, Basubia and Manajwa residents having moved away. The Divisional Commissioner regarded the residents of Mababe and Sankuyu as 'squatting on Crown lands' (BNA1962b), but followed the recommendation of the Chobe Game Reserve Committee that it would be wrong to remove them if they had already been staying there with the approval of the administration. He noted that Mababe was a well-established village of thirty huts, and that the residents of Mababe, and Sankuyu (whom he wrongly assumed were also Basarwa), lived by hunting buffalo and selling the biltong in Maun at ten shillings per bundle (ibid). He therefore recommended degazetting the section south of latitude 19°S to exclude Mababe and Sankuyu, (reducing the area of the reserve to 10,800 square kilometres) which was done in 1964 (Map 3.3).

Figure 3.3: 'No Hunting' sign produced in 1961 for the new Chobe Game Reserve.

Despite the reduction in the size of the reserve, the people of Mababe lost significant areas of land in which they used to hunt and gather. The new division of land between *lefatshe la diphologolo* ('land of the animals') and land that people were permitted to inhabit were marked in part by signs which were nailed to trees around the perimeter of the new Reserve from 1961. These signs (Fig. 3.3) clearly implied the responsibility of Basarwa for the decline in wildlife populations that had ostensibly led to the creation of the reserve. The highly stereotypical illustration (peppercorn hair, steatopygia, extended stomach, loincloth, bow and arrow) ignored the fact that most Basarwa in the region are 'black' and have hunted mainly with spears, snares or guns since the end of the nineteenth century (cf. Selous 1893:107).

In 1967, Chobe Game Reserve was upgraded to the status of a national park, and in 1980 it was extended to include a corridor between Chobe National Park and Moremi Game Reserve, giving it a final size of 10,570 square kilometres (Map 3.3). Needless to say, these progressive encroachments on their *de facto* tenure were sorely resented by the residents of Mababe. On my first visit to Mababe, I raised the topic of the Park with Mma Kgosi, the headman's wife. Her reply exemplified the strong sentiments it aroused:

> The real name of Savuti [a popular destination within the Park] is ≠An≠o. The whites named it, as they wanted to ask Basubia the names and not us. They named it, made a park, and took away our land. They took all our land. Today we are in a ditch, we are treated as those that are thrown away.

The 1964 boundary of the Reserve lay 20 kilometres north of Mababe village (which in 1960 had moved from the western side of where the Machaba river entered the Mababe depression, to the eastern side). Although the reserve cut off land in which many of the older residents had grown up (particularly around Sedungu), they were able to continue using land south of the boundary. However, the 1980 extension, which linked Chobe National Park with Moremi Game Reserve, brought the park boundary to within two kilometres of Mababe village. This extension encompassed two particularly fruitful areas that were visited regularly by the its residents. One was N//odzõ, a section of the Magwikhwe sand ridge, with concentrations of *Motsentsela* (Berchemia discolor), *Mompudu* (Mimisops zeyheri) and other fruit trees. The other was !Hodo, southwest of Mababe in a riverbed where water is usually found close to the surface, and where animals often congregate.

In an allusion to the tribute system to which they had been subject to under Batawana, Kebuelemang complained to me that the government has 'taken the chest [*sehuba*] of the land'. As well as meaning 'chest', *sehuba* means 'tribute', as the chest of an animal, being the most fatty and best-valued part of the animal, was often demanded as tribute by the Batawana.

Khwai used similar metaphors about losing their best land to conservation, accusing land use planners of 'picking the eyes out' of the Khwai area'[28] (OCC 1995:109). As with the creation of Moremi Game Reserve, there was no local consultation about the 1980 extension of Chobe National Park. In the laconic words of one resident of Mababe in a *kgotla* meeting, 'the only consultation they did was from a plane [as they flew over the land viewing what they wanted]'.

In all three villages, narratives of the seminal events that led to their loss of land and resources are, like the Khwai women's narrative of being dumped like sorghum from a sack, stories of the stealth of the government in taking 'their' resources. For example, Morgan, a young member of Gudigwa's 'Masarwa Community' committee related the loss of their Special Game Licences (to pave the way for their entry into OCT) thus: 'They took our passes at night. They came in the dark, and went away with them quickly, without any consultation'. For Mababe, the boundaries of the extension were marked by cutlines through the bush, which men from Mababe were employed to help cut. 'We thought we were cutting firebreaks' explained Kebuelemang, 'until they told us it was a park, and we could not let these feet of ours touch the other side'. Each of these narratives is not so much a factual account of historical events (although some may well be accurate), as a passionate statement decrying a process of alienation, in which these are key events. Land lost to the Park has become a focus for resentment against a general loss of control that the older residents of Mababe feel. 'We didn't suffer for meat like we do today. Today we have no life', I was told by //Ae/getso, a seventy year-old woman, 'The old life was better because we ruled ourselves, and now the *ndoba* [cutline][29] is making us hungry and we have no food'.

Constituting space in the northern sandveld

This chapter has so far contextualised the historical experiences of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa, and the relationships they have had with the land around them. I end by drawing out a theme implicit in much of what has been covered; how the residents of the northern sandveld constitute their landscape. In other words, how they perceive, talk about and represent the physical space in which they have lived, and how this relates to contemporary struggles over its tenure. Much of this struggle is symbolic, aimed at representing their landscape as one in which they have a legitimate place. It is a struggle they face today

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[28] A suitably indirect means of calling the government's land use planners 'vultures'.
[29] *Ndoba* is a Shiyei word used for bunds they made to change the flow of floodwater in the channels of the Delta. It is used in Mababe as a nickname for the cutline, after its role in 'blocking' the flow of people.

primarily in the face of a pervasive form of 'preservation' that has little place for people. 'Khwai has always been an area belonging to wildlife and safaris. Not people. They [i.e. the government and safari operators] stopped any developments from coming here, because we are only Basarwa', Moses told me. This expresses the double predicament that the residents of Khwai and Mababe face: as people in a 'wildlife' area; and as Basarwa in a socio-political system dominated by non-Basarwa people and values.

Opposing the authority of the government that has been imposed on the land and people of the northern sandveld alike has involved a struggle to map their own authority over land they regard as their own. On a symbolic level, Basarwa attempt to represent their landscape according to their own experiences, values and practices. The most immediate dominant construction of the landscape of the northern sandveld is that which divides it into land for people and land for wildlife. The conceptual separation by Batswana between villages (for people) and bush (for wildlife) underpins this dichotomy, and the very real boundaries it puts into place. By challenging this dichotomy (a popular academic project as well, cf. Croll and Parkin 1992), and asserting their 'home' as encompassing the whole land, Basarwa undermine the legitimacy of such constructions and their consequences. This does not mean Basarwa lack a conceptual distinction between 'village' and 'bush'; separate words exist for 'village' (***//'ae***, which carries connotations of 'home') and 'bush' (***ts'ao***). Nonetheless, in the current situation of alienation from 'the bush', Basarwa often stress the connections between these categories of landscape, rather than their separation. Pekenene, the elderly Chairman of Mababe's Village Development Committee, explained:

> The life of living in the bush is ours. When our parents died, we listened to you white people and the government who wanted us not to fill the land, and we moved together here. Yet, we still desire that life. If my eyes were still okay, I could take you through the whole land between here and Kasane [at the northern border of Botswana] and tell you all the names. *We are in one place because of government, but we are people who move in the land* (emphasis mine).

A delegate from Mababe, at a seminar in Ghanzi in 1992, spoke of the effects of dominant representations of 'Mababe' as being the small area in which their huts were situated. This contrasted to a huge area that they had called 'home' and used regularly in the past, but to which they were no longer allowed access:

> I do not know any longer how big Mababe is. Each time I go out I am told by Wildlife [DWNP] that I have gone too far, I am not in Mababe. Even for gathering berries we are not allowed to go where we used to go, it is not Mababe (quoted by Saugestad 1998:256).

Plate 3.11: *Se tshube naga* ('don't burn the veld') sign in Mababe village.

Plate 3.12: Sign between Khwai and Mababe, on boundary of Chobe National Park

The message that such statements convey is that official restrictions on land use in the northern sandveld are tantamount to an intrusion into their home. It is an analogy made all the more explicit by statements such as Idea's that the government had made a park 'through the middle of our village', or Elias from Gudigwa's comment that, '[buffalo] fences have been made all around us. I feel like I am in a kraal'. Such assertions are not simply primordial statements of being hunters and gatherers, or 'people of the bush'. They are instead expressions of a very contemporary nature, that challenge the legitimacy of dominant representations of their landscape, through asserting their own meanings, values and interpretations on it.

Constituting the whole land as their home also has another implication; that having its 'owners' in it is a *normal* state, rather than an aberration. 'The land is unhealthy and dying now that we are not allowed into it anymore', commented several people to me as we walked through land in which they no longer lived. Basarwa views of the 'ideal' environment are thus in this sense opposite to dominant ideals (cf. McCann 1997).[30] Rra Diatla, from Khwai, explained to me how he saw it as anathema that the government wanted to move his village from a wildlife area:

> When the government moves people, Basarwa are not the same as others. We are people who live with animals. Animals live better with us. We have stopped moving around, as the government didn't want that. We have settled in one place, in a wildlife area. They say we should move to a place with no animals. If we move they will follow us, as we go with their blood. They will then move us again. Where will we then go? We will not finish the animals. We have many guns, but are the animals finished?

The health of the land is thus dependent on the presence of Basarwa in two ways: firstly in the essence of who they are as Basarwa ('we go with their blood'); and secondly because of their active custodianship of the resources ('we have many guns, but are the animals finished?'). One of the most commonly talked about methods of land stewardship was to burn it each year at the end of the dry season. 'God likes the smell of burning', Moses told me. Basarwa commonly burnt the veld for a variety of reasons, apart from giving God a good aroma. It made hunting easier, it 'cleaned' the land, and it promoted the growth of new grass shoots. 'In the park we are not allowed to burn so that our animals can eat, yet Bayei burn in their homes', Mma Kgosi commented to me, illustrating not just the pastoral motivation behind burning, but its legitimation through comparing the veld with their home.

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[30] That humans are not separate from nature is commonly shared in African views of the environment (Peterson 2000:163-74). Perhaps a long history of living in large villages has marked the separation between people and 'the bush' in Batswana conceptions of the environment.

Practices such as hunting with guns and burning the veld are today loaded with contention. Basarwa asserted that they controlled the excesses of such practices, such as not burning in areas that fire would damage fruiting bushes or shrubs, such as ***ts'inya*** (Diospyros chamaethamnus), and by preventing indiscriminate hunting. In the opinion of Mojeremane, a 55 year old man from Khwai:

> The animals are much less now. In our culture when herds of animals came, we would look carefully and see which one to kill, then we would all eat. But now government has made the land rotten by selling so many animals to be killed. Now they say it is us who have killed them all'.

Accusations fly in both directions, yet beyond the evidence that wildlife numbers on the whole are decreasing (DWNP 1994), blame cannot be simply placed on, or avoided by, any one party.[31] Nonetheless, many residents maintain a sense of custodianship over an environment of which they form an integral part, but which government policies have progressively eroded. Although CBNRM claims to recognise their capacity to manage local resources, its pretence of *introducing* natural resource management to local residents gives little cognisance or respect to pre-existing management practices.

Attempts by Basarwa to map their own authority onto land has also involved attempts to define spaces of autonomy, which tend to be within huts, or in the bush outside the parks. Feelings still run high in Khwai over a period in the early 1990s when DWNP officials sometimes came into people's huts at night to check their cooking pots for poached meat, a practice which caused such uproar that it was stopped. Although the confines of people's huts are once again spaces of personal autonomy, public spaces within the village remain domain of the government. Its authority is marked in these spaces, for example, by red signs in the middle of Khwai and Mababe (Plate 3.11) that declare *Se tshube naga* ('Don't burn the veld'), a potent statement considering the derisory name by which Batswana sometimes refer to Basarwa; *Matshubanaga* ('Those that burn the veld'). The government's gaze is also marked by the presence of officials, especially in Khwai, where DWNP has a base, thus regulating behaviour that may be deemed illegal. Khwai have had some success in resisting this increasing presence in their village of an authority they feel at odds with, by flatly rejected a DWNP proposal in the mid-1990s to build their headquarters in Khwai. Had DWNP's plan been carried out, it would have involved the building of forty houses, and the influx of two hundred employees and their families. This would have increased enormously the local gaze

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[31] Although coming from a very different epistemological context, recent studies have also pointed to the positive impact of habitation and cultivation on environmental health (e.g. Tiffen and Mortimore 1994 for the Machakos District of Kenya, and Fairhead and Leach 1994 for Sierra Leone).

of authority in their village, which already makes it necessary, for example, to bring illegally hunted meat into the village under cover of darkness. Beyond the reach of this gaze - i.e. out in the bush - there is more freedom. In the words of Mma Roger from Khwai, 'It is nice in the bush, there is not so much hunger there as here in the village. If you see a vulture you can follow it, not like here where there are so many [DWNP] officials'.

On a symbolic level, Basarwa often stress their role in attaching names to tracts of land. 'We say the land is ours because we have named it, showing it was all our land', explained Mojeremane from Khwai, echoing a comment by Jack, a middle-aged man: 'To see the owners of the land, see what language it is named in'. In the same manner, no pretence is made to name land over which no authority is claimed: 'We have no name for Okavango because it is not our land', Kebuelemang, the headman of Mababe, told me. The constitution of landscape in this manner is an ongoing process; areas may be named and renamed as social dynamics change. A waterhole near Mababe, for example, is called Tshitshirimtshaa ('Tshitshiri's water'), after a resident more commonly known by his nickname, Phentse.

Protecting rights to land is a role that women in particular take. This is undertaken on a village level, such as speaking out in public meetings (particularly in Khwai), as well as on a family level, such as Sangando's wife, who prevented the Land Board from allowing the headman of Mogotlho, a village along the river, to drill a borehole for his cattle in their field at Khyao/gwaba. Speaking out on the fundamental issue of land is a role that often falls on women, a role that women (not altogether undeservedly) accuse their men of neglecting because so many of them are often either absent or drunk.

Conclusion: the centrality of land

In tracing the changing tenure patterns of Basarwa in the northern sandveld over the land on which they have lived, and the way that these changes are understood and represented by its inhabitants today, one factor stands out; control over land is an absolutely central issue in negotiating development options today. In the words of Roy Sesana, Chairman of First People of the Kalahari to a delegation from the northern sandveld who visited his organisation, 'Our human rights are our land. They cannot do anything for us if they take us off our land'.

Despite having lost much of the land they would call their own to conservation, Basarwa in the northern sandveld enjoy a privilege that many other Basarwa no longer have; being able to call at least some land their own. Such land (outside the parks) remains common property, but they face comparatively low levels of competition for its use from non-Basarwa agro-

pastoralists. Having land that is at least customarily recognised as under their jurisdiction (because there are no other non-Basarwa locally to claim it) gives them a sense of standing in the wider social economy that landless Basarwa cannot achieve. This principle is confirmed by Wily (1976:16), who observed that relations between Basarwa and non-Basarwa at Bere (in Kgalagadi District) improved after they were officially allocated a small tract of land, as it gave them a standing by being able to declare, 'we have a place'. Woodburn (1997) also observed higher levels of discrimination against landless Hadza in Tanzania than against those who were still able to assert a measure of control over land. Nonetheless, the land encompassed by Chobe National Park and Moremi Game Reserve is a tangible representation of the history and identity of many Basarwa in the northern sandveld. It is also a reminder of their alienation from not just their physical space, but from many of the markers by which they have come to define themselves.

The following section on livelihoods continues these themes, examining not just the material consequences on livelihood strategies of conservation policies, but the means by which representations of land, livelihood strategies, and Basarwa themselves, affect these very material considerations.

PART II

LIFE

Chapter Four

Wilderness, people and development

Development is about mapping and making, about the spatial reach of power and the control and management of other people's territories, environments and places.

Jonathan Crush, *The power of development* (1996:7)

Considering the means by which the residents of the northern sandveld pursue 'life' directs our initial attention upwards in the frameworks of power, to those that strive to set the parameters within which livelihoods are defined and pursued. This chapter focuses on the people and institutions that attempt - from beyond the northern sandveld - to define what shape such grand concepts as 'wilderness', 'Bushmen' and 'development' should or should not take within it. As such, it provides a context for subsequent chapters on attempts by Basarwa to shape their own livelihood strategies. As with 'first peoples' worldwide, the external domination of Basarwa is increasingly structured by the state (Hitchcock and Holm 1993, cf. Albert 1997), and so a large part of this chapter focuses on the Botswana government. However, I follow Barth's (1994:20ff) suggestion that any analysis of ethnic and social processes needs to pay explicit attention to micro, median and macro levels at which they work. Apart from the Botswana government (macro), this chapter takes as its main subjects the interests of local and international tourism and conservation bodies (macro and median) and the perceptions and interactions of wider Setswana society (median and micro). Through each of these interconnected levels, I examine the structural relationship between

Basarwa and the various people and institutions that have attempted to define and shape both them and the landscape in which they have lived.

I begin by laying out a framework for understanding the nature and operation of power, particularly in the interaction between the state and its subjects. I then consider Western views of the place of Basarwa in the landscape of the Okavango Delta. Conceptions of nature and the African landscape are integral to this analysis, as these have influenced the place that people have in it, and thus policy and practice in conservation and tourism. I go on to examine how Basarwa are imagined by their non-Basarwa neighbours, and the discursive frameworks through which Sesarwa ethnicity in Botswana is moulded. Lastly, I examine how these views have contributed towards defining development interventions, particularly the Botswana government's Remote Area Development Programme (RADP).

Understanding power

'Power', over the last two decades, has been a popular, but remarkably diffuse, concept in the social sciences. With the rise of poststructuralist theory, studies of power began focusing on the power inherent in a variety of discourses or practices that do not appear to be formally part of the institutions of government, rather than on the coercive and explicit means that institutions use to achieve their aims. A key conception of power from this viewpoint is the constitution of knowledge. Moulding a subject group into an object of knowledge becomes a means of exercising power over them. The state and other dominant institutions become the producers and possessors of legitimate knowledge; of history, of collective representations of identity, of what is legitimate and what is not. Such claims to knowledge and attribution of ignorance are important themes in analysing development (Hobart 1993:3), bringing to the fore the forms of power that development creates and sustains. Development ideology is thus not simply an abstract set of philosophical propositions, but, to use Ferguson's words, 'an elaborate contraption that *does* something' (1990:xv).

Drawing largely from Said's (1979) notion of 'Orientalism', Escobar (1996:225) presents development as a particular set of discursive power relations that construct a representation of the Third World. He asserts that 'thinking of development in terms of discourse makes it possible to maintain the focus on domination... and at the same time explore more fruitfully the conditions of possibility and the most pervasive effects of development' (Escobar 1995:5,6). Representing particular regions or people as 'underdeveloped', or backward and childlike, allows them to be treated as such by legitimating intervention (cf. Hobart 1993:2). Development thus becomes, in part, an attempt to produce governable subjects, largely by

asserting norms and forms (such as fields of knowledge and types of landscape) by which a society can be understood and regulated (Watts 1996:48, cf. Scott 1998). The emphasis on discourse in the work of these critical development theorists is inspired by Foucault's conception of discourse as not only language, but also what is represented and asserted through language. Discourse on a subject contributes towards the 'laws of possibility, rules of existence of the objects that are named, designated or described within it, and for the relations that are affirmed or denied in it' (Foucault 1972:91). A discourse of development, therefore, identifies appropriate and legitimate ways of thinking and speaking about development, as well as practising it. A *discursive perspective* of development embraces a totalising conception of how development, through language, 'constitutes' the people it acts upon (Grillo 1997:12) by defining who they are, and the realms of possibility in which they exist. While this perspective on development has generally been applied on a global level, to relations between the 'First' and 'Third' Worlds, I use it here to illuminate the exercise of power largely on a national level within Botswana.

Useful as it is in its attention to the 'hidden' operations of power, the poststructuralist theory that has inspired critical development perspectives has two particular shortcomings that I attempt to avoid in this analysis. The first is the dissolution, in the face of power, of the people we write about to an incoherent 'subject effect', losing any sense of agency or creativity (Lee 1992:36, Ortner 1995:183-7). The second is the reification of a diffuse concept of 'power', that has little grounding in real events and processes, and whose reach becomes infinite. This is a theoretical shortcoming that is reproduced in the thinking of some critical development theorists who privilege the overreaching power of the state as a monolithic entity (Grillo 1997:20-1). Although I do draw upon some generalised conceptions of the state, I attempt to give cognisance to the limitations of state power, and to ground assertions of power in the individuals and institutions that give them life, rather than representing the state as an abstract unity of legislation and buildings. The state, as Barth (1994:20) argues, needs to be treated as an actor, but it is also more than that. It is made up of a multiplicity of different actors, forming a varied and embodied institution filled with individuals.

Integral to a focus on discourses of 'development', is the notion of hegemony, used by Gramsci (1971) to describe the cultural processes by which those in power maintain their privileged position. Political and economic power is maintained largely through being able to naturalise a particular way of seeing the world, particularly social relationships, rather than through overt repression. It is in these terms that Escobar (1995:53) characterises the power of global development dynamics:

> The forms of power that have appeared act not so much by repression, but by normalisation: not by ignorance but by controlled knowledge: not by humanitarian concern, but by the bureaucratisation of social action.

Hegemony attempts to obscure the political nature of the dominant-subordinate relationship to those that are subordinate, to whom it is meant to appear as natural order. Nonetheless, hegemony is not so complete as to preclude resistance to the political order. Dominant representations colour, but stop short of determining, consciousness and social action: 'hegemony is always more fragile than it appears, and never as total as it would claim' (Ortner 1984:154). These representations are therefore a zone of continual contestation. Subordinate populations, such as Basarwa, are not simply deluded and passive captives of the state, but at the same time their expressions of politics and culture exist in, and are shaped by, the fields of state power. This chapter focuses on the social, political and symbolic dynamics of domination. The extent to which Basarwa articulate with Setswana hegemony, in both affirming and challenging its frames of reference, is explored in Chapter Six (with reference to identity) and Chapter Seven (with reference to development).

Imagining wilderness

Integral to dominant perceptions of Basarwa have been conceptions of the landscape in which they have lived. As one of only two inland deltas in the world, and a sea of waterways in an otherwise parched semi-desert environment, the Okavango has long captured the imagination of Western visitors. Take, for example, the lyrical description penned by Hauptmann Streitwolf, a German visitor to the Delta in 1911:

> High leafy trees wooded the island banks and mirrored their hanging greenery in the water. Lotus lilies and water-plants of all sorts covered the unruffled water surface. Countless waterfowl sat motionless on the pools and trees, amongst the deep green of which often showed forth the dazzling white of the heron. Duck, geese, 'snake-neck' birds [cormorant], did not dare to disturb the silence of this secluded region. It is a beautiful world, this swamp region! Practically uninhabited except for a few Makuba [Bayei] engaged in catching fish, shut off from the outer world and difficult of access, it has retained its virgin charm (translated and quoted by Stigand 1923:403).

Streitwolf's vision of the Okavango as a wilderness where nature rules supreme has proved pervasive, especially within the context of the expanding tourist industry. Today, the Okavango Delta continues to attract foreign tourists seeking its 'virgin charm', and fuels Botswana's fastest-growing industry; tourism, growing in economic terms by an average of 11.5 percent per year through much of the 1990s (GOB 1997b:38).

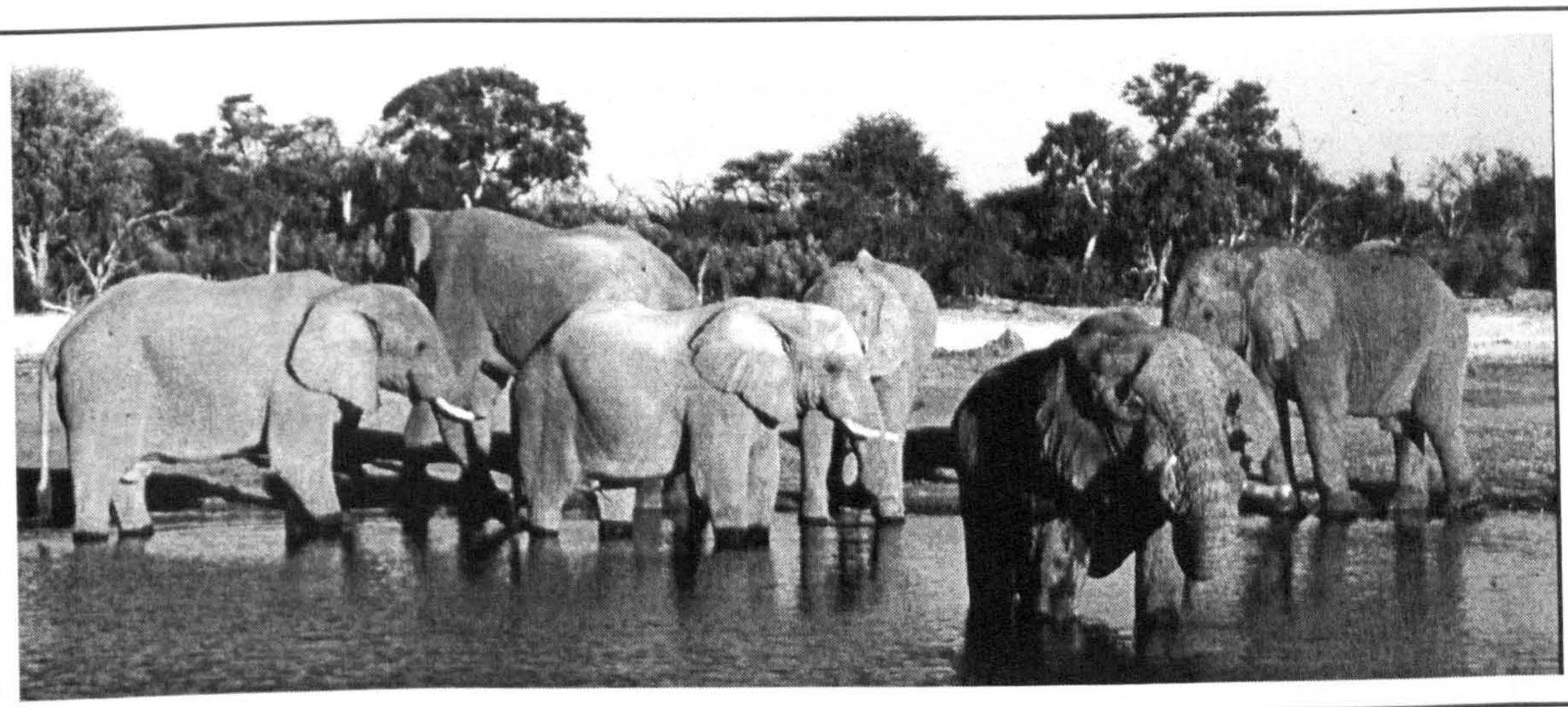


Plate 4.1: Elephants on the River Khwai.

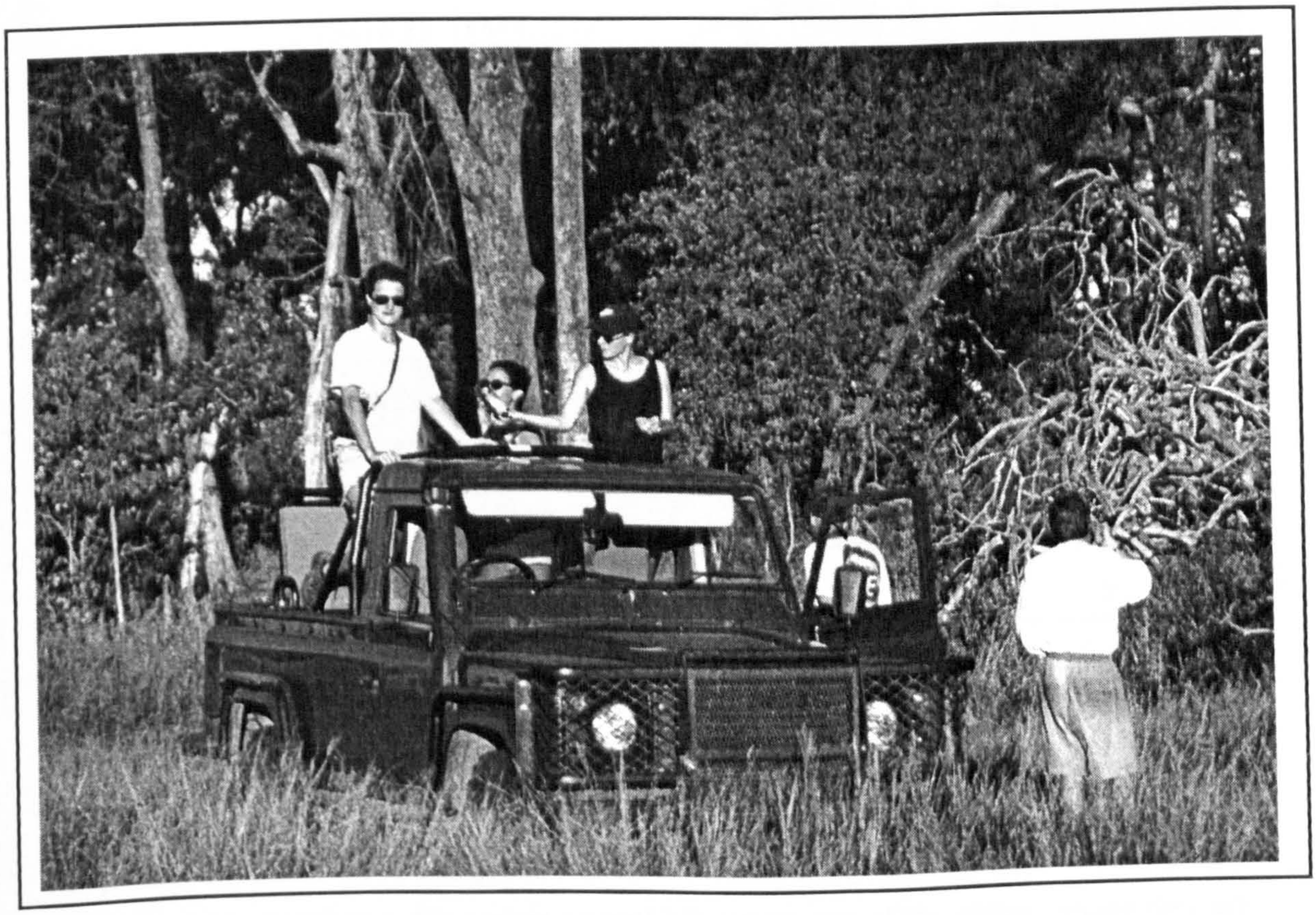
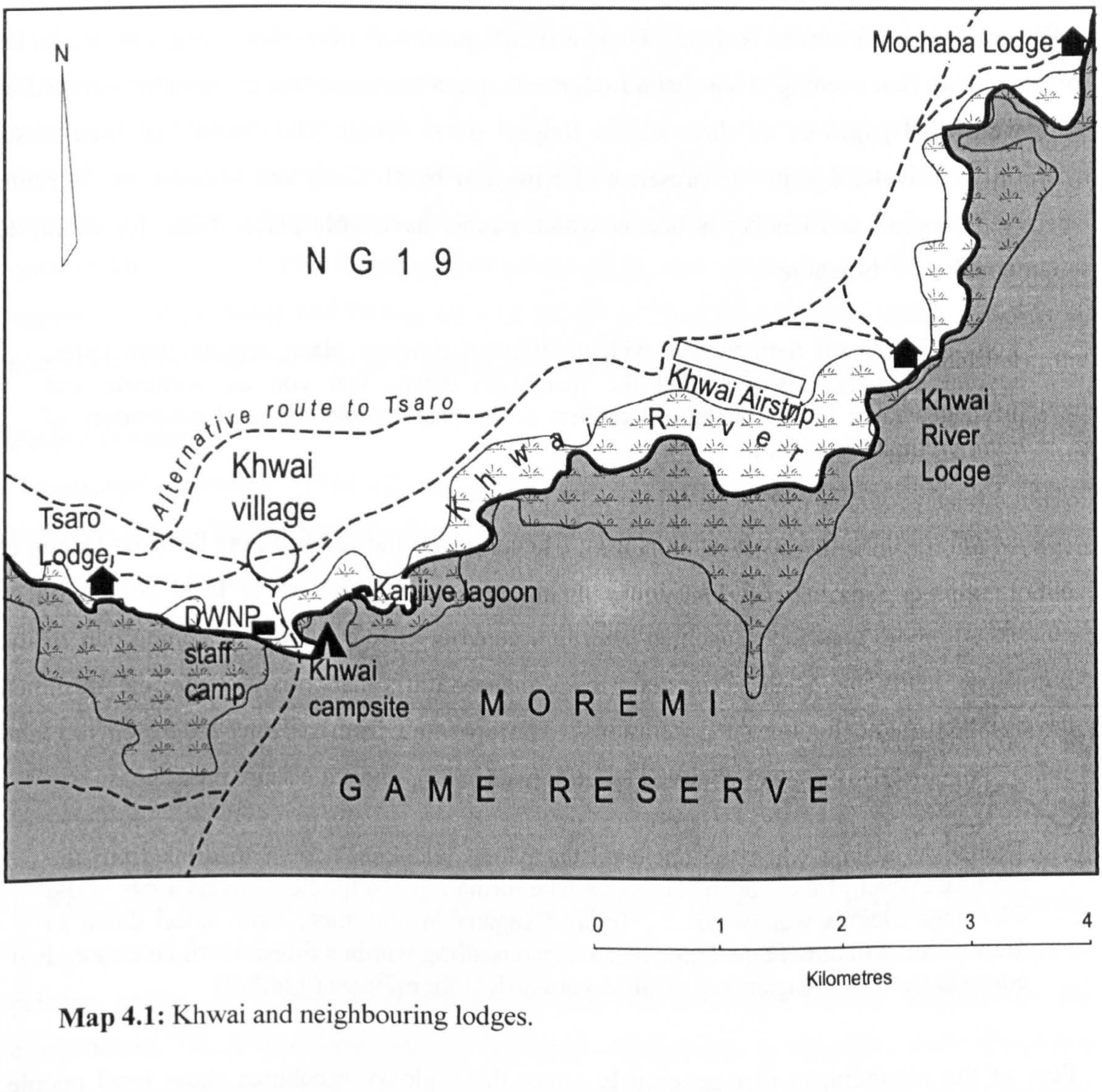


Plate 4.2: Tourism.

In 1997, 130,195 visitors paid to enter Moremi Game Reserve and Chobe National Park, the most common destinations of foreign tourists. Almost half of these stayed in the Okavango Delta's 54 lodges or hotels.[32] The first of these was Khwai River Lodge, built in 1967, four kilometres downstream from the present site of Khwai village. Khwai village is itself a hub of tourist activity, situated at the North Gate of Moremi Game Reserve, the transit point between Moremi and Chobe for overland visitors, and in close proximity to two other upmarket lodges



Map 4.1: Khwai and neighbouring lodges.

in addition to Khwai River Lodge; Mochaba and Tsaro (Map 4.1). Clients of these lodges arrive by light aircraft to a dirt airstrip several kilometres east of the village, where they are

[32]Source: Department of Tourism unpublished statistics.

picked up by a guide in open-sided safari vehicles, and taken to relax and refresh before a game drive. One of the lodges, Tsaro, lies to the west, beyond Khwai village. Clients on the way to Tsaro, however, are usually taken on a specially constructed circuitous route to avoid the village of Khwai, one example of how 'nature' is carefully 'staged' for tourists seeking the authenticity of a wilderness experience.

Selling and consuming nature in the Okavango Delta

'We are living a dream to be here', Dick, a retired professor from New York, told me as he savoured his first evening at Machaba Lodge, echoing a comment that continually surfaced in the well-filled pages of all three of the lodges' guest books. The dream that their hosts carefully cultivate, despite the presence of Khwai at North Gate, and Mababe on the route between Moremi and Chobe, is one in which people have little place. Take, for example, Gametrackers'[33] brochure:

> You find yourself harmonising with a different, timeless place, remote from cities, beyond ordinary history... and the realisation dawns that you are fortunate and privileged to be in one of the last corners of the planet *under the total governance of nature* (emphasis added).

An analysis of the publicity brochures from fifteen lodges and camps in the Delta by Damm et al. (1998:8) reveals that fourteen make no mention of whatsoever of local population or culture. Three do mention 'Bushmen', but in a generic sense as an unthreatening part of the prehistoric landscape, such as the claim by Kanana Safaris that 'this is where the Bushmen have stalked game for untold generations'. The brochure from Xugana lodge, on the land claimed by Two-Boy who was moved to Gudigwa (p. 88), gives the same message:

> There was a time when the ancient Bushman would kneel down to drink from the promised water of the Xugana lagoon, a lake formed by the timeless meanderings of the Okavango Delta's waterways... . Today 'Xugana' means more than 'kneel down to drink'. You will now find a lodge on an island nestling within a forest of wild ebony and *garcinia* trees... . Xugana has awaited your arrival for millenia (ibid:8-9).

Few of the photographs that generously cover these glossy brochures show local people. Apart from eager servants within the confines of the camp, the only non-dislocated and contemporary people presented in scenes of the Delta are Streitwolf's 'Makuba' polers, who

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[33] Gametrackers is a subsidiary of the international leisure group Orient Express Hotels, which owns Khwai River Lodge.

are reinvented in tourist brochures as mediators, to guide tourists in their dugout canoes along the waterways.

Actually, most guides drive open-sided four-wheel drive vehicles. They do however, play a crucial role as interlocutors between their clients and the raw and unpredictable environment. Their role in protecting and educating clients in this new experience gives them a unique form of authority, which can be financially rewarding. 'Dangerous' encounters with elephants, and 'once in a lifetime' glimpses of rare animals such as leopards, can be carefully managed so as to elicit generous tips, which can raise a guide's income to higher than that of their superiors in the busy season. Despite their room for manoeuvre, however, guides – very few of whom are Basarwa – are most successful if they reinforce the vision that has attracted tourists in the first place. They, alongside the residents of Khwai and Mababe, inhabit a world not only consumed by people from outside Africa, but also to a large extent produced and controlled outside Africa as well. This illustrates two aspects of the neo-colonial nature of tourism in this region: that it produces and thrives on conceptions of the Okavango as Edenic; and that its economic control and benefits exist in the main far from the locality of their production.

People in nature

'Landscape', Mitchell (1994:1-2) suggests, 'doesn't merely signify or symbolise power relations: it is an instrument of cultural power'. Representations of landscape can act, in much the same way as an ideology, to naturalise a social construction of wilderness; an external nature that can be dominated, conquered or protected by a human society that exists as separate from it. Neumann (1998:9) refers to this as the 'national park ideal', which he describes as the 'the notion that "nature" can be "preserved" from the effects of human agency by legislatively creating a bounded space for nature controlled by a centralised bureaucratic authority'. From its inception with Yellowstone National Park in 1872, this particular ideal has provided a model for national parks throughout the world, not least those in Africa. As Neumann (ibid.) and others (e.g. Williams 1973, Mitchell 1994) have shown, the genesis of this ideal coincided with a Euro-American trend towards seeing landscape as pristine nature, in contrast with the degradation that industrial society wreaked on the environment. The African landscape has been particularly prone to Western constructions as a special kind of 'Eden' (Anderson and Grove 1987:4-6), thus begging 'protection' as national (and more recently, international) heritage, for consumption by modern society. As such, these landscapes – of which the national park is the ultimate form – have paradoxically become primary sites of capitalist production and lucrative generators of foreign exchange.

Needless to say, these 'pristine' environments were not untouched by the hand of man prior to the arrival of tourists. Promotional material for Xugana makes no mention of virtually the only known and excavated prehistoric archaeological site in the Delta - about ten metres from the present bar area (Damm et.al. 1998:9) - nor of the more contemporary habitation by Two-Boy's family. The Okavango Delta thus represents (as Neumann [1998:31] characterises national parks in general) a harmonious, untouched space of nature, masking the colonial dislocations and obliterating the history of those dislocations, along with the history of spaces that existed previously.

Closely associated with the concept of the unique and mysterious wilderness of the Okavango Delta has been the idea, in the second half of the twentieth century, of a mystical and unknown people hidden in its depths. For some, the wilderness of the Okavango constituted the final frontier beyond which the last undiscovered Bushmen might be found. Four expeditions were mounted between the 1940s and 1960s to attempt to 'discover' the 'remnants' of the River Bushmen: Balsan (1950); Van der Post (1958); Cowley (1969); and Heinz (1969). 'Mystery and ignorance hang over the reedbeds of the swamps', wrote Heinz (1969:743) in introducing his journey. 'Some say that remnants of Bushmen tribes live hidden away on inaccessible islands here and that the River Bushmen who have been seen are tall and dark, totally unlike their small, light skinned desert cousins'. In true expeditionary fashion, Cowley and his men set off from Maun in 1966 with 150lb of leaf tobacco, 40lb of trinkets and a locked tin trunk of instruments for taking anatomical measurements, looking for 'Swamp Bushmen [who] were said to be the purest survivors of the Old Yellow Race' (1969:3). He had already faced the disappointment of visiting Khwai in 1960 and finding them 'hybridised'. He therefore aimed to find out what he could 'before the fabled tribe of swamp Bushmen was swallowed up in the racial hodgepodge of the Okavango Swamps' (1969:61).[34] Needless to say, each of these expeditions did not find the pure exemplars they had hoped for. Constrained by a fantasy of 'pure Bushmen', protected by a 'pure nature' from being tainted by non-Bushmen, it was inevitable that they would come to a similar conclusion as Seiner (1910:31-2) had half a century earlier; that Swamp Bushmen were, 'relics in a rapid process of assimilation into the dominant culture, and that in a few years it would be impossible to describe them unequivocally as Bushmen'.

[34] The fascination continues. Shortly before I left Scotland in 1997 to undertake my fieldwork, I was contacted by a researcher from the BBC who told me she had heard that the last River Bushman was alive somewhere in the Okavango Delta, and did I know where he was?

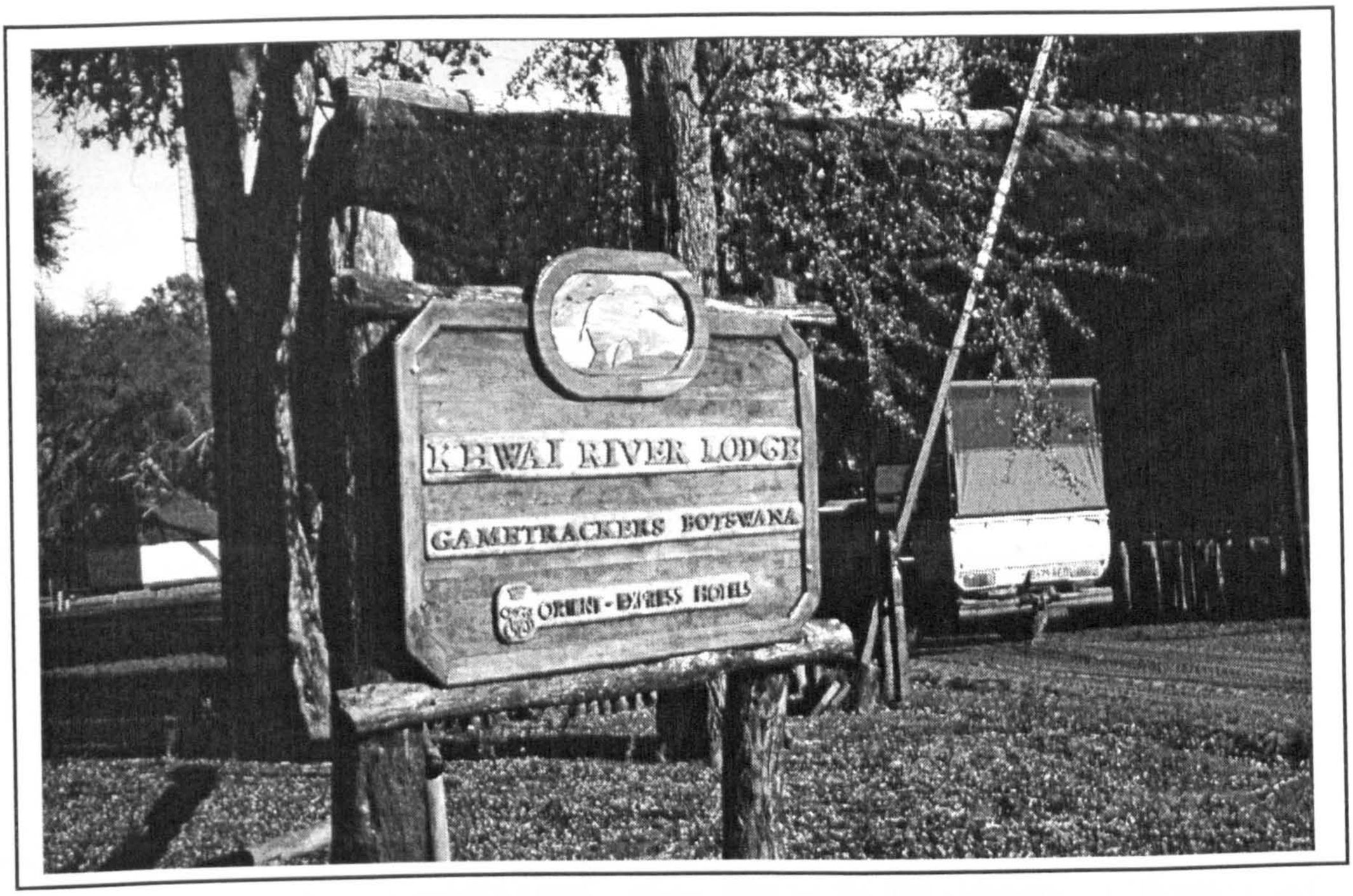

Plate 4.3: Entrance to Khwai River Lodge.

Plate 4.4: Bridge over Khwai River at North Gate (entrance to Moremi game Reserve).

Despite such disappointments, the lasting idea that certain kinds of people had a natural place in the landscape did allow some conceptions of national parks to include native inhabitants within them. It was in this mould that the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) was created by the colonial government in 1961, conceived as a reserve for both Basarwa and wildlife. These two aims were inextricably linked, as the welfare of Basarwa, 'who would continue to pursue a traditional hunting and gathering existence' (DWNP n.d.(a):1) depended on the conservation of wildlife and vegetation. George Silberbauer, who recommended the creation of CKGR in 1960, was well aware how tenuous the Basarwa hold on land in the Kalahari was in the face of expanding pastoralism, and thus saw the reserve as an opportunity to protect Basarwa land rights (Silberbauer 1981:37). Silberbauer specifically stated that, '[i]t is not intended to preserve the Bushmen of the Reserve as museum curiosities and pristine primitives, but to allow them the right of choice of the life they wish to follow' (quoted in Hitchcock and Brandenburgh 1995:8). Nonetheless, it did not seem out of place to the colonial government that 'hunting and gathering' people should have a place in a game reserve. As time passed, however, the situation became less clear cut. It was obvious that the 'hunter-gatherers' had accumulated stock: about 2000 goats; 225 chickens; 127 donkeys; and 23 horses by 1976 (Murray 1976:9). A fact finding-mission was commissioned (Pilane et.al. 1985), and the DWNP later concluded that 'the interests of the people and the wildlife have diverged and were no longer compatible' (DWNP n.d.(a):1). Initial threats by the government to remove the residents of CKGR in 1987 were put on hold after international protests, but were realised in 1997 when residents of Xade, the largest settlement within the reserve, were moved out of the reserve.

The example of CKGR provides an illuminating insight into various processes examined in this and subsequent chapters. In post-independence Botswana, the notion of a tract of land reserved for a specific non-Batswana 'ethnic' group was anathema to the non-ethnic discourse that the government propounded. Moreover the explicit focus of government programmes affecting Basarwa has been integrationist rather than isolationist. Despite the changing conceptions of local Basarwa as hunter-gatherers or petty-pastoralists, it was perhaps therefore inevitable that the Botswana government would move to change this incongruity. That this happened at a time when the government, through CBNRM, had a stated policy of encouraging local involvement in tourism and conservation, provides a telling commentary on the overall policy framework in which CBNRM is being implemented in Botswana.

Narratives of racial purity and of natural purity form parallel discourses based on the same presuppositions. They rely on the essentialisation of a pure form of nature, and of people (in

this case 'Bushmen') subject to it, who exist in contradistinction to others (both white and black) who have subordinated and tainted nature. Like wilderness, 'Bushmanness' is seen as fragile and easily lost, as the residents of Xade found to their cost. 'It is very difficult to refer to [the residents of Khwai] as Basarwa because they are not true Basarwa anymore, they are too mixed, and their features are different... . The Bushman gene is a very weak gene and disappears quite quickly', I was told by one of the original tourism operators in the Khwai area. Such constructions of nature and 'Bushmanness' mean that once Bushmen cross the conceptual line between nature and culture, their presence in a 'wildlife' area becomes an anathema. The very real implications of this worldview and consequent policy have been repeated not only in CKGR, but also the Etosha Game Reserve in Namibia, from where Hai//om Bushmen were evicted in 1954. Justifying its actions, the commission argued that Hai//om 'assimilation had proceeded too far', so that it would not be 'worthwhile to preserve the Heikum [sic] as Bushmen' (Schoeman n.d.:14, quoted in Widlok 1999:25).

Casting Basarwa in the Okavango Delta as inimical to the aims of the proposed Moremi Game Reserve was therefore an essential strategy to their eviction, a characterisation in common with general characterisations of African hunting by conservation advocates as cruel and wasteful slaughter (Neumann 1996). June Vendall-Clark, a prime initiator of the reserve, alleged that, 'Masarwa Bushmen in some areas routinely surrounded herds of red lechwe antelope and deliberately broke the legs of as many of them as they could so that the flesh of the still-living beasts would stay fresh for longer' (1990:223). Tourism operators questioning the ongoing settlement at Khwai use arguments in the same vein. 'But they are not even pedigree Bushmen',[35] one of the lodge managers complained to me about Khwai, and another argued that most of Khwai's residents are only there because of the job opportunities in the area. Both these assertions carry the implication that their 'transformation' from Bushman to proletariat delegitimises their continued presence in a 'wildlife area'.

Contestation over the landscape of the Okavango therefore becomes one of ideas of nature and culture, and where (literally) to draw the boundary between them (cf. Neumann 1998:11). Damm et al (1998) use the rustic wooden bridge at North Gate (Plate 4.4), which spans the Khwai River - the northern border of Moremi Game Reserve - as a metaphor for the crossing between nature and culture. While this is true in a legal sense, in that Khwai village is

[35] Her use of a word normally reserved for animal breeds betrays the conceptual categories in which 'Bushmen' are often placed by observers. While few would explicitly adhere to the implications of such a statement, the use of terms normally reserved for animals in discourses about 'Basarwa' is remarkably pervasive (Damm 1999:3).

permitted to exist on the north bank, and its inhabitants are excluded from the south bank (unless in transit or as guides), in reality priority is given on *both* sides to nature. Although none of the three lodges have been granted concessions to land beyond their immediate vicinity, their extensive use of NG19, which encompasses all three lodges and Khwai village (Maps 3.2, 4.1), for game viewing contributes to its *de facto* status as a wildlife area. About half their game drives are conducted outside the reserve, as the reserve is not fenced, allowing the wildlife to move freely either side of the shallow river. Practices such as creating and maintaining wildlife-viewing tracks, attempted restrictions on movement and petty-hunting of springhares and birds all reinforce Khwai's sense of alienation from the area around their village. The construction of Khwai as a 'nature' area means that attempts by the lodges to present an image of corporate responsibility to their potential clients are framed with reference to the environment, rather than local people. For example, a brochure of Gametrackers boasts, 'We maintain a respectful relationship with a fragile environment and pride ourselves on harmonising with the ecological balance; the wellbeing of all natural inhabitants is paramount'. Most operators would simply prefer Khwai and Mababe not to be there, and in the words of one operator to a consultancy team gauging opinion on Community Hunting Areas in Ngamiland, their greatest need is 'birth control' (OCC 1995:A39).

The land on which Khwai is situated (NG19) is designated as a Wildlife Management Area, which permits existing settlements to remain, but places restrictions on landuse, such as the creation of new settlements, or the keeping of domestic stock. Nonetheless, Khwai's position in an area sold to tourists as 'wilderness' has prompted efforts by various government departments to relocate them elsewhere. These are efforts that Khwai has so far resisted, agreeing to relocation only if it is back to their previous location *within* the reserve, thus challenging its designation as a 'nature' area. 'They don't know there are people here', was an exasperated comment I often heard in Khwai, referring to the priority the government and tourist industry gives to nature over people in their area. The invisibility of Basarwa is not a new phenomenon. Early censuses of Ngamiland tended to ignore Basarwa, such as the 1921 census which noted 'a good number of River Bushmen', but failed to enumerate them because of the 'impossibility of catching and numbering the wild River Bushmen' (Stigand 1923:412). This census completely ignored Basarwa in the sandveld (the ancestors of those now in Gudigwa), and, still today, the villages of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa are omitted from many official maps. Nonetheless, although the autonomy that this invisibility afforded may have been valued, Basarwa in the northern sandveld today face a struggle to make their presence felt in an environment that is predominantly regarded as one in which people have little place.

I now turn from predominantly Western ideas about their landscape to ideas about Basarwa themselves within Botswana, and the conceptual place Basarwa occupy in the worldviews of their neighbours.

Imagining Basarwa

The nature of dominant stereotypes of Basarwa in contemporary Botswana is an issue that, as Hitchcock and Holm (1993:314) have pointed out, academic discussion has tended to avoid – perhaps a function of most such research being done under the auspices of official programmes. There is no doubt that Basarwa are imagined in a particular manner by many of their neighbours, but the forms that these imaginings take are open to various interpretations. To illuminate the place of Basarwa in the wider conceptual landscape of Botswana, I recount two everyday interactions between Basarwa and non-Basarwa, chosen from a multitude of similar interactions that I observed.

The first occurred as I sat next to the dusty road west of Maun with the two Basarwa men I had started chatting to, as I whiled away the time waiting for a lift to Ghanzi. One of them told me he was G//anakhwe, who speak a southern Khwe language, related to the northern Khwe languages of Okavango. Another young man, a Moyei from Gumare, sauntered over and started chatting to him. Without a hint of malice, he asked the G//anakhwe man, 'Where are the *namagadi* [female ones], I want to grab their backsides'.[36] The G//anakhwe man fended off his question, and they continued to make small talk with each other, holding each other's hands as many men do in friendly conversation. *Namagadi* is a Setswana word meaning 'female', but it is usually reserved for animals. Viewing the reproductive nature of *Basalagadi,* or female Basarwa, as equivalent to that of animals or livestock, has a long history. Chapman (1971[1868],1:74, quoted in Morton 1994:226), for example, said of the Bangwato that they 'hold the Bushmen as beasts, term them bulls and cows, heifers and calves. In speaking of a female they say she has calved'. Yet, as Gordon (1992:212-3) argues with reference to constructions of Bushmanness by white settlers in Namibia, their 'inhumanity' was only one in a series of stereotypes used to justify actions against them, and did not load the use of Basarwa women for sexual services with the taboos of bestiality. That the Moyei's question did not elicit visible offence hints at the pervasive and socially-acceptable structures of society in Botswana that governs social interaction between Basarwa and non-Basarwa.

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[36] *Steatopygia is* a common stereotype of Basarwa in Botswana.

The second example is taken from a visit to a small Ju/'hoansi village in Western Bushmanland, Namibia, by a group from Khwai, Gudigwa and Mababe. The Kalanga[37] driver we were with turned to some of the group, and commented on the children going to fetch water: 'If only they went to school, they would be people'. This perhaps gets closer to the nature of dominant attitudes to Sesarwa ethnicity; that it is not always so much about Basarwa *per se* (as the comment was made to people who called themselves Basarwa as well), but about a 'backward' lifestyle that many Basarwa are seen to represent. This is a lifestyle associated with the bush and a lack of 'civilisation', which makes the civilising project of development particularly potent when aimed at Basarwa. The categorisation of people according to stereotypical modes of subsistence structures similar relationships elsewhere in Africa as well (Woodburn 1997), and is an important marker with which Basarwa are categorised by their neighbours, alongside language (particularly its abundance of clicks)[38] and physiognomy.

The relegation of Basarwa to beyond the realm of civilisation is illuminated by the conceptual model governing Setswana land use (documented, for example, by Peters 1987:184). It consisted of a pattern of concentric circles around the sphere of sociality, the village (*motse*). As one moved outwards, through arable land (*masimo*), then cattle posts (*meraka*) and finally no-man's land - the bush (*naga*) - one moved from the realm of society to that of nature and wilderness. Although the function of the bush, especially around the Okavango, has changed, becoming for some a lucrative site of production through expanding cattle ranches or tourism, the stereotype remains that Basarwa are of the realm beyond society, of the bush. As Basarwa are seen to lack the civilisation that comes from sociality, they also represent a way of life that we all come from; they are *people of the past.* This stereotype is reproduced (and thus enforced) through local representations, such as school textbooks that tend to present Basarwa living very much as their predecessors 20,000 years ago (Motzafi-Haller 1995). In a similar vein, the National Museum's Mobile Museum Service travels the schools of Botswana showing, for example, 'how Basarwa live' using John Marshall's classic films of Ju/'hoansi made in the 1950s.

Several observers have commented on local representations of Basarwa as people of the bush (Suzman 1997) and of the past (Motzafi-Haller 1995, Saugestad 1998:60, Damm 1999).

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[37] Kalanga are a large Bantu-speaking minority in Botswana, originating mostly from the east of Botswana.

[38] One aspect of this is the common conception that Sesarwa languages are difficult to write (cf. Hasselring 1997:43). For example, the simple name *Khwai* is spelt in at least four different ways by DWNP alone in various signs and brochures: *Khwai, Khwaai, Khwaii* and *Kwai.*

There has, however, been little comment (with the exception of brief mentions by Kuper [1970:45,66,91]) on perhaps the most important aspect of this; that they are thus people without *molao* – without 'law'. Although references to *molao* frequently surfaced in conversations I had in the northern sandveld, there is no commonly-used Bugakhwedam or Ts'exadam equivalent.

Being seen as people without *molao* has two important implications for their relationship with the contemporary state. The first arises from the view that those who lack *molao* are anarchic, and do not submit to the norms and codes of conduct of society. Take, for example, the description Rra K, a Moyei man in Ditshipi (on the southeast side of the Delta), gave me of Basarwa (speaking in the present tense).

> Basarwa of the sandveld are unfamiliar with other people, and run away when you approach them. If you come across them alone they will kill you, or else they will see your tracks, follow you and kill you. If they see you, the first thing they ask you for is *motokwane* [cannabis]. You had better give them what you have, and leave quickly before they kill you.

For individuals, such stereotypes make Basarwa unpredictable neighbours. For the state, they make unpredictable subjects, as Basarwa, being beyond the reaches of *molao* (i.e. governability), become seen as separatist. In a review of the RADP, its originator, Liz Wily noted that one of its major stumbling blocks was the fear that Basarwa living in the bush are being separatist (1982:302). A decade later, this was still in evidence, with the reaction to calls for greater access to land by a delegation of Basarwa to the government. A spate of reports in national newspapers followed, claiming that Basarwa were being separatist and demanding self-rule (*Daily News* 21.05.92, *Mmegi* 22.05.92, *Botswana Guardian* 22.05.92., all quoted in Saugestad 1993:40).

The second implication, which follows closely from the first, is that they need to come under *molao*. Bringing Basarwa under *molao* is an essential step in increasing their 'legibility' (Scott 1998) to their neighbours and the state. Until the 1980s, some government officials used the unfortunate – though accurate from their point of view – term for their consequent policy; that Basarwa should be 'domesticated' (Gulbrandsen, in Saugestad 1998:113). 'Integration into mainstream society' has since become the more acceptable buzz-phrase for policy towards Basarwa. Behind this aim lies the assumption that Basarwa will gradually absorb dominant norms, values and customs, submit themselves to existing authority structures and, in short, become more governable subjects. Integration is justified by constructions of Basarwa as backward. 'How can you have a Stone-Age creature continue in

the age of computers?' Festus Mogae - then vice-president of Botswana, and now president - was reported by the New York Times to have asked (Daley 1996). Presenting a similar viewpoint, the outgoing president, Sir Keitumile Masire, commented in Ghanzi, as he gave his farewell tour, on the relocations of Basarwa from Xade in CKGR (as reported in the government-produced *Daily News*):

> He said the government did not want to see certain tribes in the country remaining primitive. He blamed some anthropologists and sociologists from Europe for a misinformation campaign on the relocation programme. He said such people wanted Basarwa to remain primitive for research purposes. He described such people as '*bo marata helele*' [loosely translated as 'those who enjoy a spectacle'] who did not want to see Basarwa enjoying the fruits of this country like the rest of Batswana (Shabani 1998:1).

The President presents Basarwa (presumably *all* Basarwa, although his statement is in the context of Xade) in a similar manner to the way they are commonly represented, especially in development discourse; by the attributes that they *lack* (Motzafi-Haller 1995, Saugestad 1998). In this case they lack the position to 'enjoy the fruits of the country', but it could be any number of things; *molao,* civilisation, money, jobs, or skills. The problem is defined as one of culture, that their culture - rather than systematic dispossession by their neighbours - is to blame for their material poverty. This is not a new thought; almost a century earlier, Passarge (1997[1907]:128) had commented on the unequal relationship between Basarwa and Batswana, that, 'inevitably the oppressed bear the major blame. Their inability to accept cultural imperatives, to rise to the cultural level of their suppressers is their own fault'. These representations of the problem beg a clear solution; that for 'progress' to be achieved, Basarwa must adopt a way of living that conforms to that of the majority.

The conception that Basarwa represent a 'primitive' way of life is widely held. That some of these comments originate from Bayei is especially significant, being people that for much of the twentieth century lived in a very similar manner to their Basarwa neighbours. To most people in Botswana, as well as the government, Basarwa represent an inappropriate continuation of 'the primitive' in a country that has prided itself on its rapid economic growth and social change since independence. While this view of Basarwa is not too different from popular Western notions, it has very different connotations; rather than constituting a romantic alter ego of their own society, they are an embarrassment.[39] Basarwa, therefore, generally occupy a space in the conceptual landscape of contemporary Botswana that is

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[39] Demonstrated too in the embarrassed giggles that often accompany public showings of John Marshall's classic films of Ju/'hoansi by the Mobile Museum.

different not only from Setswana-speakers, but also other minorities as well. Although Basarwa are not alone in carrying a legacy of subjugation, they face the double disadvantage of also being placed conceptually in a very different category from other minority groups; being people of the bush, and people who lack the constraints of *molao.*

The state, (non)ethnicity and development

Botswana achieved independence in 1966, surrounded by white-ruled states that were in the process of entrenching their power through ethnic ascription and division. In his country's first address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1969, Seretse Khama focused overwhelmingly on the divisive ethnic policies of its neighbours, concluding:

> ...but Botswana, as a thriving majority-ruled state, on the borders of South Africa and Namibia, will present an effective and serious challenge to the credibility of South Africa's racial policies, and in particular its policy of developing so-called Bantu homelands and its stated goal of eventual independence for these Bantustans (Khama 1969:point 29).

Although this initially provided a powerful motivation to develop, in contrast, a 'healthy *non-racial* democracy' (ibid. emphasis added) based on equality, the policy of disavowing an ethnic discourse has remained, despite the magnitude of political changes in its neighbours. This policy has proved expedient beyond its time, as a means of maintaining the image of a culturally homogenous state. Rather than being non-ethnic, it is decisively *mono*ethnic, preserving the *de facto* hegemonic status of Setswana language, culture and political power (cf. Saugestad 1998:71).

About fifty percent of Botswana's 1.5 million citizens are ethnically Batswana. However, there is a deliberate blurring of the distinction between being a citizen of Botswana (labelled *Motswana*), and being ethnically a member of one of the dominant Setswana-speaking tribes (also labelled *Motswana*). Dominant discourses tend to conflate these two meanings of the root *-tswana,* so that if you are a *Motswana* (citizen), you are expected to reflect the traits that are associated with being a *Motswana* (in the ethnic sense), such as speaking *Setswana* (the language of the ethnic majority), or holding to its pastoralist values. Conflation of the two meanings is so pervasive that it is often even apparent in the narratives of non-Batswana (in the ethnic sense), such as the unnamed Mosarwa who told a team of consultants researching policy issues on wildlife, 'I am now a Motswana [citizen]. Therefore I must own cattle [associated with the pastoralist values of ethnic Batswana]' (Cooke et al 1992:11).

Commenting on the relationship of Jews to the state, Marx (1975[1844]:219) argued that the abolition of the particular is the condition of universal 'equality' within the 'modern' state. By proclaiming universal equality, the state, in its political functions, dissolves the particular and only recognises a universal (and presumably equal) populace that has shed all particularities. The particular – Basarwa ethnicity in the case of Botswana – does not disappear, but it becomes delegated to *outside* the sphere of the political, thus becoming depoliticised. Prejudice and democracy thus work, in this respect, towards the same goal; the dissolution of the particular in political life (cf. Sartre 1972:57). In the case of Basarwa, the Botswana government has acted no differently than most other states that have faced a similar situation (cf. Morris 1989:182 for Australia, Saugestad 1998:226-8 for Norway); by defining their particular problem in terms of *quantitative* needs that are different from those faced by other citizens only by degree. Even taken simply as a matter of degree, the differences are startling. Remote Area Dweller illiteracy, for example, was 86 percent in 1995, compared to a national average of 26 percent (Selolwane 1995:7). Yet ignoring differences in kind allows denial that the present situation of many Basarwa is the product of a specific and concrete history in which the dominant are intimately implicated.

The state's aversion to recognising ethnic particularities in its policies is nonetheless challenged in two respects. Firstly, by the distinct position that Basarwa occupy conceptually, including in the minds of many officials, in the social landscape of Botswana. This is reflected, for example, in the tendency (which is not a result of an explicit policy) for the government and independent press to refer to 'Basarwa' in reports that concern Basarwa, although they do not use ethnic labels in reference to other people in Botswana. The second challenge is a more direct one, arising from both beyond and within its borders. The situation of Basarwa has become an issue of concern to not only donors and researchers, but also prompted the rise of Basarwa interest groups, such as First People of the Kalahari. Along with occurrences such as the second regional conference for Basarwa held in Gaborone in 1993, and the CKGR removals, Basarwa have gained a higher profile within Botswana. The treatment of Basarwa has become a political issue, taken up by local organisations, such as Ditshwanelo (The Botswana Centre for Human Rights), and some opposition politicians. For example, Ephraim Setshwaelo, the head of the newly formed *Bosele* UAP party, denounced the CKGR removals at a public rally in March 1998 (as reported in *Mmegi* 06.03.98):

> 'It is barely conceivable that residents of such a village as Serowe or Ramotswa [large Batswana villages] could be uprooted from their ancestral land'. He dismissed as false government claims that Basarwa had moved voluntarily. 'I personally visited the Basarwa and what they wanted to know was when Batswana will cease their dictatorial hold over them'.

When the particular (or others on behalf of the particular) assert themselves and challenge their situation, this poses a dilemma for the state, forcing it to acknowledge the particularity of Basarwa, despite espousing a non-ethnic discourse. An example of this is in the issue of research permits, stipulated by the Anthropological Research Act of 1967 as a requirement for all research undertaken in Botswana. My research permit, issued by the Office of the President, gave me permission to undertake research on the proviso that, 'This research does not cover Basarwa at all. At no point during data collection will the issue of Basarwa people be touched upon, nor will there be any research involving this population group'.[40] Local-level officials are also well-aware of the government's sensitivity to issues pertaining to Basarwa, such as I found when I attempted to interview Nyamanyama, a man from Gudigwa who was serving a three-year term in Maun prison for illegal possession of a firearm. '*Kgang ya Mosarwa ke kgang ya moruthuthwa*' ('The issue of Basarwa is a hot one'), the Prison Officer in Charge explained as he denied me a formal interview.

Despite these contradictions, Basarwa nonetheless face a development apparatus that is explicitly aimed at *dissolving* local difference, subjecting them to a universal development plan that does not take into account local histories. This becomes a central issue in the analysis of CBNRM as implemented in the northern sandveld (Chapter Seven). I focus here, however, on the Botswana government's Remote Area Development Programme (RADP), as it is has been the single government programme that has most comprehensively put into policy and practice dominant attitudes towards Basarwa. The RADP also illuminates the productive nature of power; the means by which Basarwa as the subject group are turned into an object of knowledge over which others, as dispensers of truth about the needs and requirements of Basarwa, attempt to gain control.

RADP: dissolving difference

The RADP is the most influential government department in the lives of people in Gudigwa, Mababe and – alongside DWNP - in Khwai. Several insightful evaluations (Wily 1979, Egner 1981, Kann et al 1990, CMI 1996, and particularly Saugestad 1998) have been made of the RADP, primarily under the auspices of NORAD, its main funders. Each of these, however, have to some extent made the fundamentally flawed assumption that the government is primarily a machine for delivering services. Although true to a degree, the government is also a way of governing people, a device through which certain classes and interests control the

[40] Yet, the permit gave me permission to undertake research in Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa, presumably in ignorance of the identity of the people that lived in these villages. It was an ambiguity I was relieved to be able to exploit.

behaviour and choices of others (cf. Ferguson 1990:225). Through the ways that it addresses (or fails to address) the primary issues of land and ethnicity, it is clear that the RADP fails to escape the entrenched paternalistic mould of dealing with Basarwa. It is dressed in words of concern (such as in the ex-President's assertion of wanting 'to see Basarwa enjoying the fruits of this country like the rest of Batswana'), but premised on the assumption of Basarwa comprising a category of people needing a form of development amounting to assimilation.[41] This is most immediately evident in the RADP's designation of Basarwa as *Remote Area Dwellers*, or its commonly used Setswana equivalent, *Matengnyanateng* ('those from deep within the deep'). Such designations serve to maintain their socially and politically peripheral position, as well as legitimating bureaucratic intervention. The RADP is thus characteristic of general official policy and practice towards Basarwa; explicitly integrationist, but couched in benevolent terms of wanting to avoid their social and economic exclusion.

The RADP began its life in 1974 as the Bushmen Development Programme, and underwent a series of name changes to more accurately reflect government policy. It was changed in 1975 to the more locally acceptable Basarwa Development Programme, and then the ethnically neutral Extra-Rural Development Programme in 1976, before settling on its present name, the Remote Area Development Programme, in 1977. These semantics were symptomatic of deeper tensions in the programme, between the priorities of its expatriate initiator, Liz Wily (and subsequent donor funders), and the priorities of the Botswana government, particularly its policy of ethnic neutrality. The RADP, like the account of CKGR above, is a story of a programme initiated by well-meaning activists, and funded by humanitarian donors, to address the crucial issue of land for Basarwa, but that has been progressively used by bureaucrats in a way that affirms, rather than challenges, the inherited structures of inequality.

Wily recognised that the central issue for Basarwa was land rights, and, in an early report, recommended exclusive land allocation to nexus (band territory) owners (1974:22-23). Her strategy was (in retrospect) to secure 'as much land as possible, as fast as possible, as uncontroversially as possible' (1979:128). Nonetheless, she faced the constraints of operating within a government programme, and so had to be careful to remain within its sphere of acceptability. She set the aim of fostering 'the self-reliance and development of Bushmen citizens, and to facilitate thereby their great(er) integration with the wider society of

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[41] It is not only the government that constructs Basarwa as in need of forms of assistance that it is in a position to offer. Although coming from a very different perspective, some NGOs working with Basarwa may be guilty of the same, as argued by Garland (1999) of the Nyae Nyae Development Trust in Namibia. As NGO involvement is (as yet) insignificant in the northern sandveld, I do not include them in this analysis.

Botswana' (Project Memorandum: *LG32 Bushmen Development* Para.1, 1975, quoted in Wily 1979:69). While the general aims of the programme have gone through several metamorphoses over the last 25 years, the central theme of 'integration' has remained. Ngamiland's RAD Office declared, for example in its 1998/9 budget estimate that their aim was to 'develop RADs socially and economically in order to integrate them into mainstream society', a distillation of the national Draft RADP policy, which aims to:

> Facilitate the integration of the marginalised sections of the population into the mainstream of society, and to develop rural settlements to a level that is comparable to that of other rural villages in the country by providing the necessary social services to improve the living conditions in those settlements.

The longevity of the aim of integration - like 'development' itself - has been precisely in its ambiguity. Wily (1973, quoted in Saugestad 1998:153-4) defined her use of the term as involving, 'a tacit respect of the inherent equality of all cultures and their equal right to peacefully coexist; integration must not be confused with uniformity or the abandonment of one culture or way of thinking for another'. However, considering dominant views of Basarwa, it is unsurprising that 'integration' in official policy became a tactic of attempted assimilation, with no thought that it would involve any attempt to change by the majority (cf. Saugestad 1998:235). Ambiguity was also built into the RADP through the definition in 1977 of its target group as 'Remote Area Dwellers' (RADs). An estimated eighty percent of RADs are estimated to be Basarwa (Saugestad 1995:6), justifying popular perceptions that Basarwa are the prime targets of the RADP.

The best that Wily, and donors, could hope for was ambiguous policy statements that both appeased the government, and gave the RADP the freedom to address the issues they hoped to. Challenging the status quo with an explicit land rights programme would have been impossible:

> The launching of an explicit land rights programme was unthinkable. It became clear that the programme could only survive for as long as it did not directly challenge existing land distribution... or challenge the prevailing conception of how Basarwa/ RADS should be 'developed' (Wily 1994:16).

In her own estimation, the role of the RADP has never been to challenge the status quo, but rather to 'appeal to the charitable behaviour of an emerging capitalist society' (Wily 1982:306). Considering the history of patron-client relations between Basarwa and other Batswana, this appeal has had a measure of success. The prime achievement of the RADP in evaluative terms has been the provision of essential services in remote areas - water, health

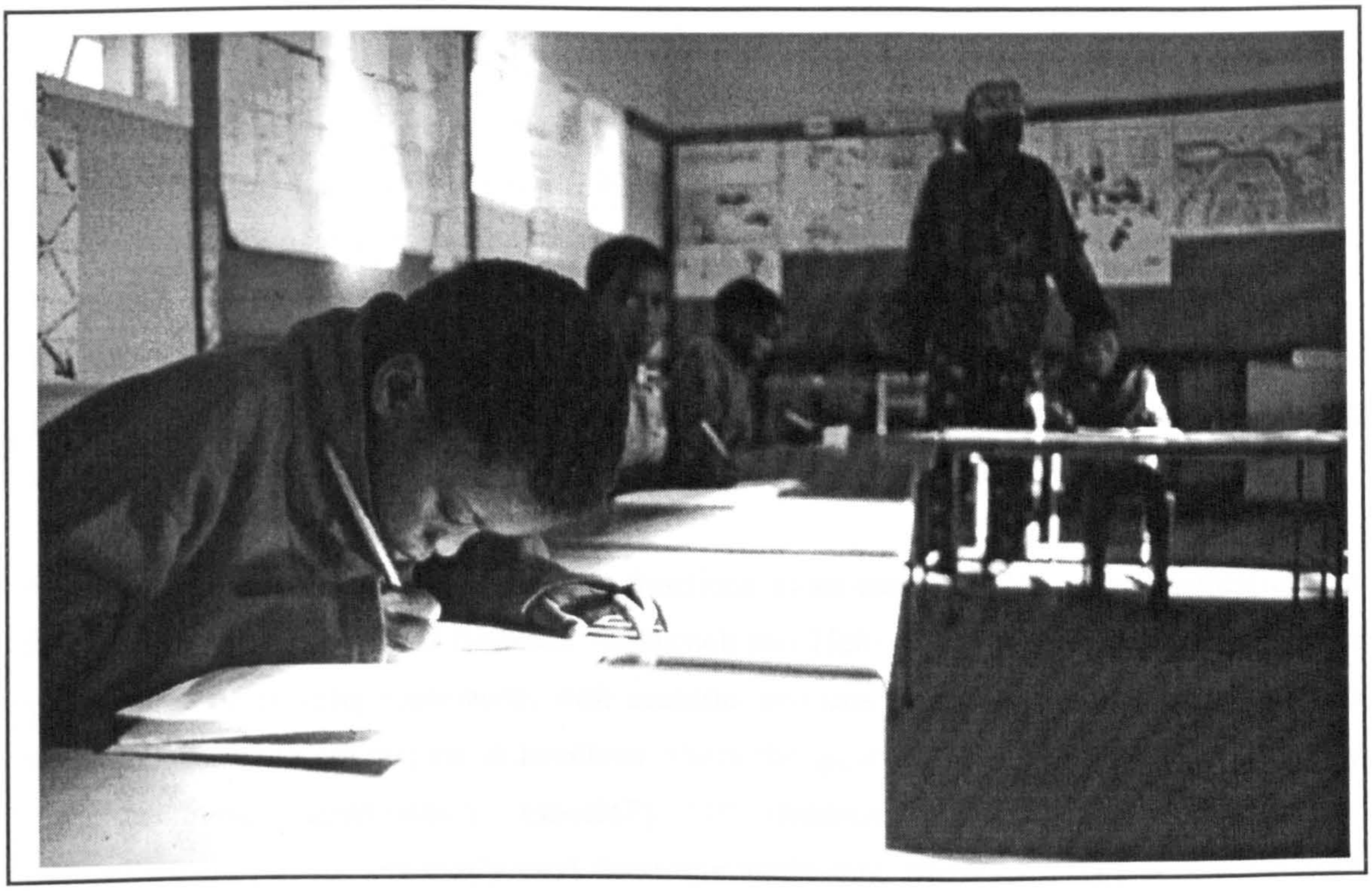

Plate 4.5: Classroom in Mababe Primary School.

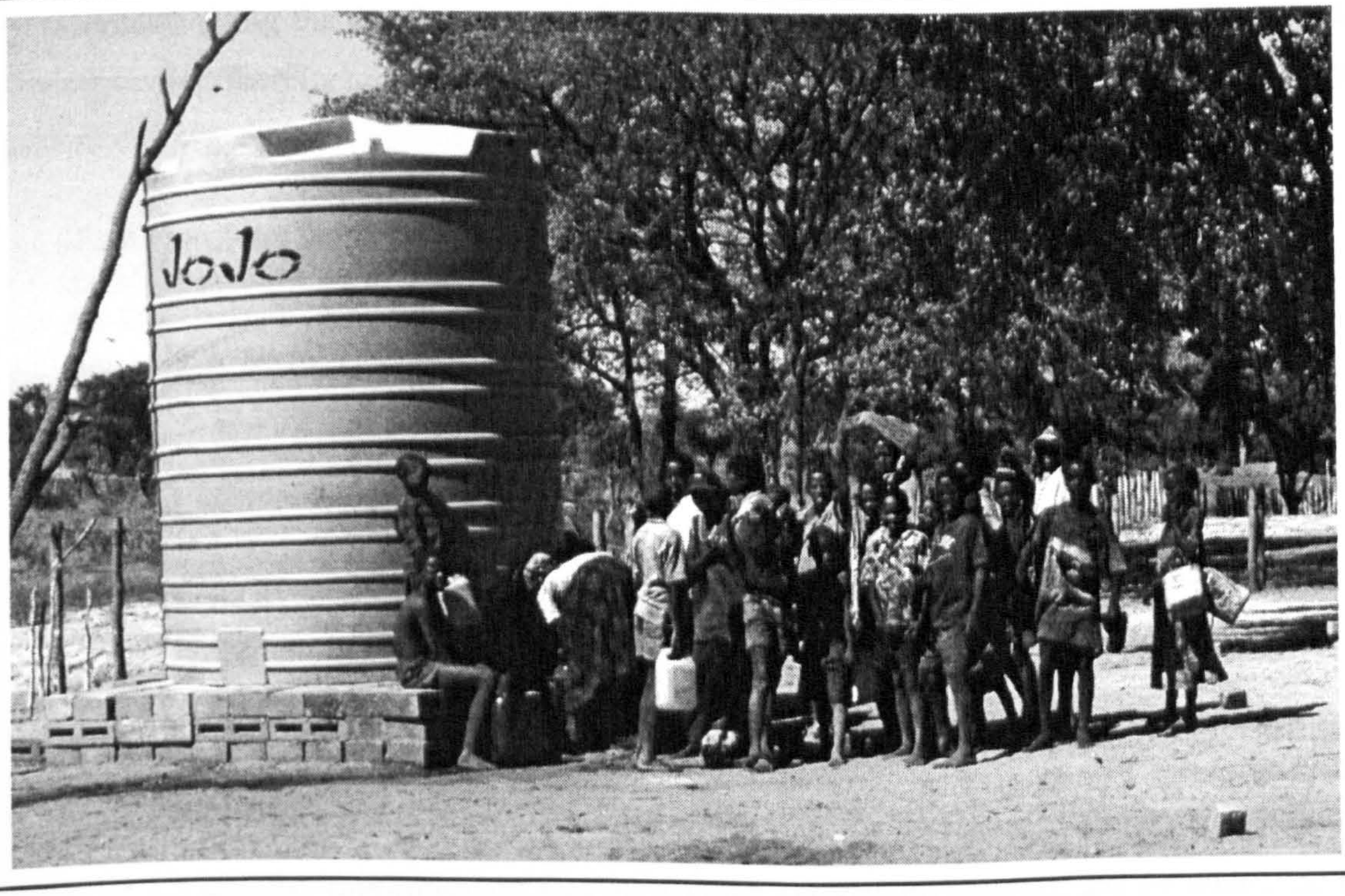

Plate 4.6: Water tank at Gudigwa.

and education (Kann et al. 1990:ix) - to form a nucleus around which settlement can form. Nonetheless, these were late in coming to the northern sandveld. Mababe received a health post in 1994, and a primary school in 1998 (Plate 4.5). In 1998, Gudigwa was still reliant on a weekly supply of water from a bowser (Plate 4.6), but a borehole, school and health-post were all in the pipeline by 2000. Due to the uncertainty of the future of their village, Khwai still lacked even the promise of these facilities by the turn of the millennium. In the meantime, primary school children from Khwai and Gudigwa have had to continue enduring overcrowded hostels at boarding schools elsewhere in the district.[42]

The RADP's focus on service provision functions as an essential element in facilitating the bureaucratic management of Basarwa. Hitchcock and Holm (1993:325) have argued that the programme of creating settlements with essential services have been, above all, a carrot to induce Basarwa to congregate at locations where the government can establish its authority and encourage assimilation, especially of children (through formal education). 'Development', or its commonly used Setswana equivalent, *tlhabololo*, thus becomes a path of modernisation in which 'they' are made like 'us' (and thus more governable). In Setswana, the most common use of the word, which literally means to 'improve' or 'renew', is as a verb, sometimes in the passive sense, *go tlhabologa* (to be developed), but most often in the active *go tlhabolola* (to develop). Both these senses imply a process involving a subject (usually the government) doing the development, and an object (in this case Basarwa) being developed. Conceptually, therefore, Basarwa are seen as passively being developed – and thus assimilated - by the government, as commented to me by a DWNP official in Maun:

> If we keep them with Special Game Licenses, how are we going to develop (*tlhabolola)* them? They must go to developments where they can have tar roads, clinics, roads, and the like. Basarwa here are different because they already have fields, so it is easier to make them leave a hunting and gathering way of life. We can entice them out by providing services and showing them another way of life is better and easier.

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[42] Yet these facilities are also often sparse. In 1998, the North West District Council (NWDC) had 434 spaces available for RAD students in seven hostels, augmented by an extra 120 spaces in tents. However, 1088 students were crowded into these spaces (NWDC unpublished figures). Most students from Khwai and Mababe went to Kareng, which in 1997 had 125 square metres of floor space in its hostel for 225 children. Unsurprisingly, they developed a Tuberculosis outbreak, and the school had to be closed for several months. The District Health Officer, among others, was of the opinion that such conditions would not be tolerated by the government if it was not Basarwa that were affected (pers.comm.).

Through all its formulations and reformulations, the RADP has consistently failed to involve Basarwa themselves in setting its agenda. This is symptomatic of a more general attitude of officials to Basarwa where, in the estimation of Selolwane (1995:9):

> Botswana continues very much as during the pre-independence era when Basarwa were regarded as minors who were incapable of making or implementing decisions of their own... . The perception of those responsible for encouraging and nurturing [the] democratic culture has been that Basarwa could not usefully gain from such knowledge and practice.

Despite being staffed by generally sympathetic officers, its assumedly apolitical nature is evident from its failure to address anything beyond welfare and training. The Remote Area Development Officer (RADO) for Khwai and Mababe, for example, was allegedly criticised by colleagues for 'talking politics' when he used a metaphor from dominant society to plead for the rights of Basarwa to hunt, a privilege granted by their annual Special Game Licences. He told a government committee considering the termination of Special Game Licences that, 'Taking Special Game Licences away from Basarwa would be just like dismissing a man when he arrives at work in the morning'. During my fieldwork period, this RADO was transferred to another district, and replaced by an officer who had been with RADP in the Central District. Although no less sympathetic to the plight of her clients, she was frustrated by what she saw as the lack of co-operation with her attempts to introduce 'development' projects. After an offer to fund an orchard in Mababe that met with little enthusiasm, she complained to me:

> To be honest, people here are lazy. They don't want to work, and they don't want to co-operate. They are different from Basarwa in Central District. They waste my time... . I used to take money they earned to the bank and give them half and make them save the rest. Here they won't let me touch their money. They won't even tell me how much they are earning... . Why don't they just move? They moved in [the western sandveld of] Central District into the settlements. Then they would be given what they want.

Well-meaning in her intentions, she was genuinely frustrated that her initiatives provoked such a feeble response. Predictably, this was blamed on their culture, rather than the patronising and non-participatory nature of RADP initiatives, and their attempts to provide technical solutions to deeper, underlying, political problems.

Dependency or self-assertion?

There is, however, an irony here. Wily hinted at it in an early evaluation of the RADP, when she surmised that through fostering 'self-reliance and development of Bushmen citizens' (1982:306) – a stated aim in the early phases of the RADP – Basarwa may be given the tools

to challenge, rather than adapt to the socio-political reality. 'Self reliance is not quite the controllable quality it may appear', she ominously stated (ibid.). This is a possibility not seriously countenanced in official circles, where the assumption reigns supreme that integration and assimilation will form a natural end to the 'Basarwa problem'.

Despite its rhetoric, the evidence suggests that self-reliance does not appear to be a *de facto* aim of the RADP. Largely as a result of RADP (and in combination with other government policies, particularly conservation policy, and the Tribal Grazing Lands Policy[43]), Basarwa throughout Botswana are estimated to be *more* dependent than ever (Hitchcock and Holm 1993:326). According to a 1989 UNICEF study, ninety percent of Basarwa in settlements depended on food aid (through drought relief, destitute rations, rations for lactating mothers and Tuberculosis outpatients, and - since 1997 in Ngamiland - rations handed out in the aftermath of CBPP) to meet their survival needs. In my estimation, about 75 percent of the food consumed (excluding protein) in Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa in 1997-8 was obtained directly from government handouts.

Unsurprisingly, the prime consequence of RADP has been judged to be the 'clientification' of Basarwa (Saugestad 1998:231). It would be more accurate to say that the RADP has constituted the logical continuation of a process of clientification that has characterised relations between Basarwa and their neighbours for almost two centuries (Chapter Two). In the same way that during hard times in the past, Basarwa appealed to the 'goodwill' of their Bantu neighbours through providing occasional agricultural labour, many now appeal to the state to provide their basic needs - the difference being that now this no longer a mutual process. 'The government oppresses Basarwa', Mogodu, an elderly man from Mababe, complained to me, 'because it doesn't give us enough food and clothes'. Far from being a sponge, Mogodu held down a job with a taxidermist company in Maun (Plate 5.3), while at the same time maintaining one of the largest fields in Mababe. Although he was not as dependent on government welfare as many elderly people, government policy has fostered a widespread attitude among Basarwa that the government should provide their daily needs. Paine (1977:3) uses the term *welfare colonialism* to refer to the perpetuation of domination of 'indigenous' people by the state through such relations of dependency. The relationships are

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[43] The Tribal Grazing Lands Policy (TGLP) was implemented in 1975, and paved the way for large areas of the Kalahari to be fenced into cattle ranches. These areas were presumed to be empty, but were often populated by significant numbers of people, particularly Basarwa (Hitchcock 1978). Reference is often made to the effects of TGLP in discussions of Basarwa dependency and land rights, but as no TGLP ranches have (as yet) been created in northern Ngamiland, conservation remains the primary competitor for land.

characterised as liberal rather than repressive, solicitous rather than exploitative, but nonetheless function to maintain political and economic control in the hands of the state.

Demands on the state, however, do not simply imply an attitude of resignation (as Mogodu's situation demonstrates), but rather an attempt to maximise opportunity in a context of difficult but varied subsistence strategies. Demands on the state are also a moral argument, as government legislation has restricted access to wildlife and veld products. The introduction of CBNRM to villages in the northern sandveld, however, has provided a context for residents to be *proactive* in addressing the fundamental issues of inequality that are in part responsible for their material poverty; control over land and its productive capacity. When CBNRM was introduced in these areas as a programme that would decentralise management and decision making over land and wildlife, it was welcomed as an opportunity to address these most central of issues. The implementation of CBNRM has opened the opportunity for dialogue on land, which RADP has kept firmly off the agenda. It has also provided the opportunity for Khwai and Mababe to mark their presence in a landscape where people have little place, countering the trend of their increasing 'invisibility'. Despite its rhetoric, however, CBNRM has proved so far in practice to have exactly the same shortcomings as RADP; its universalist assumptions make little room for the specific histories and contexts of its recipients. Moreover, like the RADP, it is not just passively universalist, but actively *universalising,* in its attempts to homogenise a plan of local management of resources in a manner that appears to extend bureaucratic power rather than promoting local-level empowerment.

Conclusion

Far from the terror and violence used to subjugate Basarwa in the second half of the nineteenth century, the continued domination of Basarwa in Botswana is pursued by much more subtle means. In a continuation of the paternalistic relations that grew historically to characterise relations between Bantu-speakers and Basarwa, the Botswana government oversees a contemporary form of welfare colonialism. Its programmes aimed at Basarwa, particularly the RADP, are dressed in the language of concern and benevolence, but function to retain, even extend, political and economic control over Basarwa. Such development interventions are underpinned by (to use Fraser's [1989:6] words), the hegemonic 'power to construct authoritative definitions of social situations and legitimate interpretations of social need'. Dominant constructions of Basarwa as people who lack skills, material goods, civilisation – in short, 'development' – function to invite the 'normalisation' and standardisation of their reality, legitimating bureaucratic intervention and control over their lives.

Basarwa in the northern sandveld face the double challenge of making themselves visible in an environment which is constructed as one in which people have no place, as well as attempting to resist aspects of the universalising tendencies of the Botswana government. Dominant discourses often characterise Basarwa as hunter-gatherers whose poverty is a product of their culture. Their culture, and the technical solutions needed to solve their problems, provide a powerful external motivation for 'development' by a concerned - but detached - government that is able to benevolently provide what Basarwa lack. Within this framework, questions of power and inequality, which implicate the powerful in the poverty of Basarwa, remain taboo. Continuing the principle established in earlier chapters, 'ethnicity' remains as a central logic in dominating Basarwa. This may be through the corrupting influence they exert on a 'pristine' environment as devolved hunter-gatherers, ethnocentric constructions of the implications of their ethnicity in popular discourse in Botswana, or the curiously non-ethnic discourse of the contemporary Botswana government.

The semiotic conquest of Basarwa in the northern sandveld is not limited to their selves, but includes the land on which many of them have lived. The Okavango Delta in particular has captured the imagination of many Westerners as a unique wilderness. It is a vision that proves so lucrative to tourism operators and the Botswana government that they actively perpetuate it: the tour operators in the packages that they sell to clients; and the government in its attempts to separate non-tourist people from these landscapes. The residents of the northern sandveld therefore find themselves in a landscape that has little space for real people, and in which they and their desires become invisible.

Having explored the political, social and economic contexts in which Basarwa are made subjects in contemporary Botswana, I now turn to examining the means by which Basarwa operate within these structures: in strategies aimed at procuring livelihoods (Chapter Five); and in challenging the cultural structures of power through narratives of their identity (Chapter Six).

Chapter Five

Livelihoods

In a village-wide workshop in June 1996, Khwai's residents came together to discuss a constitution for their proposed Community Trust. The many different ideas contributed were underpinned by the single guiding principle, expressed by a participant from the floor: 'What is important is that we make a life for ourselves'. For people never far off the breadline, the concern with 'making a life' pervaded many of their daily activities and their plans for the future. This is nothing unusual; the search for 'life' is a pursuit that dominates the lives of many Basarwa, as it does the lives of many rural - and urban - poor throughout Africa (see, for example, Kenrick [1996:62] and Peterson [2000] about immigrants in the Ituri forest of Zaire *'pour chercher la vie'*). The time of Khwai's workshop, and then the periods in the following two years that I spent in Khwai and the other villages in the northern sandveld were a transitionary period as far as their livelihood strategies were concerned. The hopes, aspirations and plans that were pinned on their proposed participation in the Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme were yet to take shape, but they had already lost their Special Game Licences, that allowed each household to hunt an annual quota of animals.

The struggle to 'make a life' has many different facets, and the diversity of strategies that economically poor people use to maintain their livelihoods has become more widely appreciated by observers both generally (e.g. Scoones 1995, Chambers 1997:162ff), and in the Kalahari specifically (Hitchcock 1996, Twyman 1997). There has also been a renewed

appreciation by development agencies of the centrality of people's livelihood strategies in considering the appropriateness of development interventions, an example being the primary emphasis on 'sustainable livelihoods' in the 1997 UK Government White Paper on International Development. This document relies on a definition of 'livelihoods' as:

> [T]he capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living (Carney 1998:4).

While this is an adequate definition of the material aspects of securing a reasonable subsistence, it does not make explicit the *symbolic* importance of how different aspects of livelihoods are constituted, and how these symbolic aspects affect material strategies. The mention of 'social resources' implies a recognition of the salience of social bonds and norms in considering livelihoods, but it stops short of taking account the wider social and political contexts that give various meanings to different livelihood options, thus shaping local possibilities within them.

For the residents of the northern sandveld, defining an adequate 'life' involves considering not only the means of procuring various subsistence options but also the meanings with which they are loaded. I identify three significant arenas in which livelihood strategies take place; money, livestock, and wildlife. Separating these arenas does not imply that they involve discrete modes of pursuing a livelihood; on the contrary each is deeply interdependent on the other. The articulation of these three realms has a long history, as evident in the following description by Kebuelemang of his parents' and grandparents' livelihoods in Mababe, typical of many such descriptions I heard:

> A long time ago, white people used to pass here by ox-wagon from Maun to Katchikau and Kasane, on the old road. They were good-mannered [*maitseo*]. They used to stop near us and rest their oxen. They gave us a few small things, and we gave them meat, and some skins like bat-eared fox and caracal. Most skins, however, we took to sell in Maun. They paid us in money, or in goods that we asked for. Often we asked for ammunition for our muzzle-loaders. About five people in our village had guns, though they are now broken. We were given guns by chief Mathiba [reign: 1906-1932], father of Moremi [reign: 1937-1946]. We hunted for him and looked after his cattle at Charoga, which was free from tsetse. My father, Kgosietsele, looked after his cattle. Minidzoko [Kebuelemang's FF] and Thabare [Kebuelemang's FFF] didn't herd, neither did I; it was only my father that did so. Mathiba said to him, 'Here are my cattle, you will keep them in your land there'. There were about thirty cattle. When a lion killed a cow, my father would set a trap with a gun, so that when it came back to eat it, the gun would be set off and kill it. Mathiba paid us by buying us things now and then, though he did not give us money. My father stopped herding once I was grown up. Many of them were being eaten by lions, so he returned the remaining ones, saying there were too many lions. He was not forced to herd, and he didn't mind doing so. They were not oppressed by

> Batawana like we are today. The biggest oppression today is that we are denied our animals, and that we cannot gather ***tzinzini*** [bird plum, Berchemia discolor] and other fruits beyond the cutline [that marks the border of Chobe Game Reserve]. We hunted over the whole area before there were borders.

Kebuelemang's narrative demonstrates the interconnectedness of money, livestock and wildlife: regular subsistence hunting also yielded products that could be traded for money and goods, which in turn provided ammunition for hunting; looking after other people's cattle not only provided subsistence from their milk (and carcasses if they were killed) but also made guns available, which further facilitated hunting. As Kebuelemang also reveals, restrictions imposed by conservation have become a central pivot in negotiating livelihoods in the contemporary context.

The realms of money, livestock and wildlife are not neutral options, but exist in a socio-political environment in which each of them signifies a different way of living and a different set of values. Employment, and the world of money and goods that this opens up, is associated largely with Western values and products. Livestock is associated with the politically and economically dominant Batswana, and the pastoralist values they stereotypically espouse, and hunting and gathering is associated with Basarwa. The values attached to these associations vary considerably, and are the subject of much debate. Contestation is especially pronounced in the context of discourses of 'development', which – to many non-Basarwa – create a hierarchy of positioning, with livelihood strategies associated with Basarwa representing 'backwardness' (Chapter Four), and money representing the 'ultimate' form of development. Of course, these are caricatures, but the varying degrees to which they are held (or denied) mean that livelihood strategies cannot be analysed in isolation of them. This is especially relevant to livelihood strategies associated with wildlife, strategies in which their identity is centrally implicated. The struggle to legitimise what the law has defined as illegitimate - and the role constructions of identity play in this - are the subject of the Chapter Six.

The aims of this chapter are fourfold. To:

- examine how different forms of gaining a livelihood are articulated.
- illustrate the complexity of livelihood strategies employed by Basarwa in the northern sandveld.
- analyse livelihood strategies in the context of the symbolic importance attached to various strategies.

- understand the formal and informal institutions that regulate these various livelihood strategies.

I argue that, not only do Basarwa rely on a wide diversity of livelihood strategies, but also they face a range of difficulties and limitations that most other citizens of Botswana do not face to the same degree. Some of these limitations are directly intended, such as legislation that restricts hunting. Others are more indirect, such as the difficulties of keeping livestock in 'wildlife areas', or being viewed as lacking the requisite skills for employment. Considering the meanings attached to various subsistence options, wildlife assumes a greater importance than simply its nutritional value, an importance that conservation policies take little cognisance of. Evidence from the northern sandveld suggests that although restrictive legislation has changed the ways in which hunting is undertaken, it has done little to reduce the volume of subsistence hunting, and has actually contributed to *undermining* local wildlife management practices.

I begin by providing a framework for the analysis of livelihoods.

Components of livelihood strategies

Sen's influential work *Poverty and Famine* (1981) brought to the fore the importance of 'entitlements', or the ability to control commodities, in understanding the relationship between people and resources in maintaining their livelihoods. His analysis of famines emphasised that the occurrence of famine is not dependent on an absolute shortage of food, but on the inability of certain sections of society to command control over it. Leach, Mearns and Scoones (1997) developed and refined his ideas in their 'Environmental Entitlements' approach, which they present as a means of exploring 'the ways differentially positioned social actors command environmental goods and services that are instrumental to their wellbeing' (1997:1). The Environmental Entitlements framework separates the means by which people pursue livelihood options into five components:

- *Environmental goods and services:* natural resources and services of the environment.
- *Endowments:* the rights and resources that social actors have, e.g. land, labour, skills.
- *Entitlements:* legitimate effective command over goods and services that are instrumental in achieving wellbeing.
- *Capabilities:* what people can do or be with their entitlements.
- *Institutions:* regularised patterns of behaviour between individuals and groups in society, which exist on macro, meso and micro levels.

This facilitates an analysis of how individuals attempt to access resources so as to turn them into endowments, and to what extent they may or may not yield *effective* command over them, transforming them into entitlements. The use of entitlements in securing a livelihood is then reflected in the differing capabilities that people achieve. Each of these four steps is mediated by various institutions that contribute to determining the possibilities that actors face. Leach et al (1997:30), claim that their framework, in focussing on the processes by which environmental goods and services, may or may not become endowments, entitlements and ultimately capabilities, emphasises three critical aspects that are often ignored in development analysis and planning: the importance of social difference; variability in human-environment relations; and historical context.

I use the Environmental Entitlements approach to disaggregate livelihood strategies in the northern sandveld, with a particular emphasis on the 'institutions' that mediate these components. Using a similar framework in her analysis of livelihood strategies by Basarwa residents of the Okwa CHA in Ghanzi District, Twyman (1997,1999) widens the institutional mediators to include identity, ethnicity, place and landscape. She found in Okwa, as I did in the northern sandveld, that these mediating factors are particularly important in considering a category of people for whom expressions and practices of 'difference' are so central to contestations over entitlement. However, although narratives of ethnic difference may present a world of clear dichotomies, these narratives must be embedded in the complexities of lived reality; of how residents of the northern sandveld pursue livelihood strategies by means that defy simple categorisations. Khwai's annual grass-cutting event illustrates these complexities.

Cutting grass in Khwai

> The onset of the grass-cutting season in July each year usually empties Khwai village of most of its inhabitants. The yards that usually have the familiar sounds of life – especially those that sell *khadi* or *monate* homebrews[44] - are silent, and visiting government or council officials are unable to hold meetings. It is a period that is eagerly awaited by the residents of Khwai, spoken of with anticipation in months running up to it. The grass-cutting season begins some months after the rains have come to an end, once the grass heads have dried and dropped their seeds; a prompt for the people of Khwai to relocate en masse to scattered grass-cutting camps along the northern fringe of the Khwai River, from Segagama to Njakamakata. As these sites are from one to five hours walk from the village, the move is generally made possible by vehicles belonging to the local councillor, or to one of the lodges (Khwai' residents owned no vehicles,

[44] Both these homebrews are sold on occasion by most households in the village. Khadi is made from *mogwana* (Grewia bicolor) berries (***du-/om*** in Bugakhwedam), and *Monate* is the brand name of a shop-bought packet mix based on sorghum.

apart from Rra Diatla's donkey cart). Transport is needed not only to bring the cut grass back to the village, but also for the old and infirm, and the multitude of belongings that are taken along; dogs, chickens, chairs, even drums of khadi to sell to neighbouring camps. Small family camps are made in wooded islands, near to both the newly arrived water of the annual flood, and the open dry floodplains that support the mokamakama or *//ee-doa* (Cymbopogon casius) grass that is cut for thatching. Once cut, the grass is usually sold to lodges around Khwai, whose constant extensions and refurbishments provide a steady market. The owner of Tsaro lodge alone estimated he had bought P150,000 worth of thatching grass from Khwai over the previous ten years. Two hours heavy work could produce a large bundle per person, that once back in the village could be split into 20 beer-can sized bundles at P1.00 each, yielding the same as a full-day's work in a menial job at a lodge.

Not long after I started living in Khwai, I joined Moses and his family for their annual grass-cutting expedition. Moses was an enigmatic character. In some ways, he fiercely protected the values and practices he associated with his ethnicity. He was a keen hunter, for example, and made a point of speaking to his five children in Bugakhwedam (or Ts'exadam, as Mma Tiro, their mother, was from Mababe) rather than Setswana. He was outspoken against the erosion of values that he saw happening through policies such as Setswana-medium education and restrictions on access to land and hunting. Yet, he defied any attempt to be categorised as 'traditionalist'. He sent all his five children to school, and his first son, Tiro, became the first person from Khwai to complete secondary school. He also thought big; from the trivial example of the huge logs that he would carry to the family fire (when the norm was to sparingly use arm-size branches), to the businesses he had set up that had brought him into serious conflict with other members of the village. His failed poultry project (to supply eggs to Khwai and nearby lodges) was one in a series of rifts that ostracised Moses from some of the other members of Khwai, and ended with a confrontation in Khwai *kgotla* that had made headline news in the *Okavango Observer* (Dimbo 1997). This particular incident had involved a dispute over money that had been given by a regular American visitor to a nearby lodge, who had made a habit of bringing gifts to Khwai village. Moses was accused by others in the village appropriating money given to the village as a whole for his own chicken project, and he in turn maintained that the money was given to him personally, and accused others in the village of unfairly taking it off him.

Moses, his wife Mma Tiro, and their three young daughters were joined in their grass-cutting camp at Njakamakata by two other families that found themselves marginalised in village affairs. Mma /Idam, who was the head of the only Moyei household in Khwai, came with her Mbunda companion, and they were joined too by Ogwe and his two children and three grandchildren. Ogwe, who struggled with a back condition, had moved to Khwai after being decommissioned from the South African Defence Force in Caprivi in 1988. Only later would I learn the implications of choosing this camp for the

Plate 5.1: Building a shelter at grasscutting camp, Njakamakata.

Plate 5.2: Carrying cut grass back to camp.

first part of the grass-cutting season; being branded a 'son' of Moses meant that I would find it harder than expected to establish relationships with those that did not get on with him. Despite what people said about Moses, however, they did admit that no-one in his camp would ever go hungry. Not only was Moses one of the only five licensed gun holders in Khwai, but he also had a reputation as an effective hunter, and every day there was meat in his camp. There was also fish, tswii water lily roots, and occasionally honey.

Cutting grass was backbreaking work; ripping a bunch of stalks off at the base with a sickle, stripping the leaves off, and then tying them into huge bundles to carry on one's head back to the camp. This had to be done while keeping an eye out for wandering elephants, or predators such as lions (that killed and dismembered a soldier upriver from us during our stay). One also kept an ear out for the passing vehicles of either a safari camp or the Botswana Defence Force (BDF)'s Anti-Poaching Unit, a couple of which may pass in a week. The distant drone of an engine was the cue to sprint to the track and scrounge what one could; buckshot from safari hunters, or the rations of well-stocked soldiers. Although the soldiers were generous with their rations, Moses was ambivalent about their presence: 'The BDF tried to stop us living in the bush, but the bush is our town where we find everything. I can't spend more than two days in Maun; I want to leave'. Although Moses had spent years working of his own accord in Maun, and other larger and more distant towns such as Francistown and the mines of Johannesburg, this period of grass cutting was cherished as an opportunity to spend time living out in the bush. Usually the mornings were spent cutting grass, and the afternoons relaxing, fishing, hunting, or visiting other camps. Yet this was not simply a 'back to the bush' exercise, it provided a very real and necessary cash income. The previous year Moses had made P1,875 from selling his grass, after he had paid one in five of his bundles to Tsaro lodge for transporting them to the village.

Khwai's annual grass-cutting event encapsulated for me some of the complexities of attitudes and relations to land, resources and economics. Like the contradictions Moses himself seemed to embody, it defied the neat dichotomies that people like Basarwa have so often been subject to. For example:

- The experience of being out in the bush was cherished, but it was done for the opportunity to earn money. Despite what he said, Moses never spent days in the bush just for the sake of it, and he criticised Mma Kanjiye's family – the only family that regularly did so – for 'putting *Bosarwa* forward' and thus delaying the 'advancement' of her children.
- The safari hunters and soldiers who denied residents the opportunity to hunt or use the land as freely as they wished were resented, but simultaneously relations with them were carefully cultivated on an individual level. These relationships could be profitable, evidenced by the lodge manager who transported Moses' grass, the safari hunter who gave him buckshot, and the soldiers who shared their rations with him.

- The lodges that surrounded their village were also resented for being an intrusion onto their land, yet they provided employment, as well as the market (and often the transport) for thatching grass that enabled the event to happen each year.

The commercial aspect of their annual grass-cutting event also legitimised the movement of people into the bush, a move that DWNP and the BDF would otherwise have frowned upon. Although such moves are not technically illegal, they lay Basarwa open to accusations of poaching if they do not have a 'legitimate' reason for being there. Going out into the bush for ostensibly commercial reasons, therefore, legitimised an activity that had many different purposes and motivations. Grass cutting became a means of demonstrating entitlement to much more than grass, but to the whole stretch of land and its productive potential, including wildlife and other resources. Khwai's annual grass-cutting event thus illuminates not only the multiple ways in which livelihood strategies are pursued, but also the interdependence between them, and the importance of considering the meanings they acquire. Although the realms of money, livestock and wildlife are not in reality discrete, their different symbolism makes them useful hermeneutic categories, and I use each of them in turn as a framework for examining livelihood strategies in the northern sandveld.

Money

'Money is essential for life', Ogwe, by then living with his family in Khwai, told me in response to my asking him why he had joined the South African Defence Force in Caprivi. Perhaps an obvious answer, but a point that needs to be made to stress the centrality of a cash economy to people so often conceptualised (within and beyond Botswana's borders) as 'foragers'. As Wilmsen's (1989b) revisionism stressed, money has been essential to life for many Basarwa since the middle of the nineteenth century. The prime means of production that were introduced in this era were guns; at first muzzle-loading Tower muskets (*matena*), and later Martini-Henry rifles (*majapane*). Guns were generally owned by Batawana who inserted themselves as intermediaries in the trade in wildlife products by lending them to Basarwa clients who hunted on their behalf. This did not prevent Basarwa from profiting themselves, however. If they were able to obtain ammunition, they could also use these guns for their own hunting. Selous, who visited Mababe in 1879 and 1884, noted, for example, that most Basarwa there hunted with guns (1893:107), some of whom had been able to obtain them by selling ivory found on dead elephants. The chiefly decree that the 'ground tusk' belonged to the Batawana chieftainship generally did not apply to Basarwa, who risked losing *both* tusks for no payment. One way to avoid this risk, however, was to keep the tusks buried until it was possible to make a trip northwards to trade the ivory in Caprivi.

Direct involvement in trade was easier for Mababe than Khwai or Gudigwa, being closer to established trade routes. The first person from Mababe to buy their own gun was Minidzoko, Kebuelemang's great grandfather. He bought it in about the 1880s with a tusk and several leopard skins. That such details are remembered points to the significance of gun ownership, both then and now. Gun ownership by Basarwa was often tenuous, however, as Basarwa who were able to obtain guns were susceptible to having them snatched by others more powerful than themselves. This was one reason given by Lekgoa for moving his family from Gudigwa to Khwai in the late 1960s; his Mokgalagadi 'master' was attempting to relieve him of a gun he had bought with wages from working on the South African mines. Today, the granting of gun licences is very restricted, with only a limited number being raffled to applicants each year. In 1998, there were eight licensed guns in Mababe, eight in Gudigwa, and seven in Khwai. However, all but four of these were shotguns, which limited the size of animal they could easily be used for. The war in Namibia prompted the influx of some unlicensed rifles to Gudigwa, where many households had a relative in the army. By 1998, however, five people from Gudigwa had been arrested for illegal possession of firearms.

Men from the northern sandveld became involved in paid employment from about the 1940s. Of course, they had worked for others long before that, but generally for no payment, or payment in kind. Older children were sometimes hired at a minimal wage to do domestic and farm work, such as Moses who did domestic work for a policeman in Maun and Francistown in the 1950s, for R2.50 (then £1.25) per month. A number of men worked within Ngamiland for traders or on road construction projects. Others went further afield, such as to work on tobacco farms in Rhodesia, for diamond prospectors in South West Africa, or to do odd jobs in Lesotho. From the 1950s many men went to the mines in South Africa.[45] One man from Khwai, Lebelo, went as far as the Middle East in 1942 as part of Botswana's effort to assist the Allies. In 1974, the South African Defence Force in Caprivi set up two 'Bushmen Battalions', to which a number of men from Botswana signed up, particularly residents of Gudigwa. They were paid salaries a lot higher they could get elsewhere; many were earning over R1,500 (then £350) per month by the time they were decommissioned in 1989. Some of those who originated in Botswana stayed in Namibia, but sixteen men returned to Gudigwa, and two moved to Khwai.

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[45] Köhler (1966:140) reports that migration by Kxoe in West Caprivi to work in the South African mines began after the First World War, and reached its peak in the 1940s. I am indebted to Gertrud Boden (pers.comm.) for pointing this out to me. The reasons for this different timing to their relatives over the border remain unclear.

The 1960s marked the beginnings of the tourism industry along the riverine fringes of the northern sandveld. The largest employers in the region were soon hunting and photographic safari operators, with their demands for local labour as trackers, skinners, gun-bearers, waiters, groundsmen, laundry women, and a variety of other jobs classed – and paid – as unskilled. It was not until 1990 that the first Mosarwa guide, Galebone Amos, was hired. Galebone was born in 1950 and began his working career in 1970, when he went to the South African mines. In 1973 he returned and began work for Ker and Downey, one of Ngamiland's first safari companies. He worked for the first year as a gardener, and the next fifteen as a tracker. In 1990, he was promoted to become a guide, a position he has held since. Galebone was able to overcome the main obstacle to most Basarwa becoming guides - fluency in English - through interacting with clients as a tracker. Most other guides are young men (very few women are guides) who have some form of education that has given them a grounding in English. Guide's wages are significantly higher than other work options available, typically P80 per day in 1998 (compared to P20 per day for 'unskilled' work), which is often doubled by tips.

While government positions and skilled work such as guides and teachers tend to be stable, 'unskilled' employment in the private sector is highly variable. Few jobs are long term, and most Basarwa who work move in and out of employment. Employers rarely give long-term contracts, especially for menial positions. A company that owns a photographic lodge near Khwai, for example, employs all its employees on temporary terms. Apart from facilitating easy hiring and firing, it also absolves them from associated responsibilities such as maternity and sickness benefits, annual increments, and severance pay. Basarwa also commonly leave jobs of their own accord, usually citing low pay and lack of respect or mistreatment as the main reasons.[46] With very few exceptions, camp and lodge managers are expatriates, usually white South Africans. Managers that I spoke to complained about the difficulties of finding suitably skilled local employees. The emphasis on formal training particularly affects Basarwa, who generally have less formal qualifications than other Batswana, and whose ethnic difference classes them, in the words of some employers, as 'raw'; a useful qualification for tracking, but little else.

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[46] Employment conditions in the tourism industry were a concern of the government, being the main topic of speeches held by the Minister for Ngamiland on a tour in February 1998, which included Khwai and Mababe.

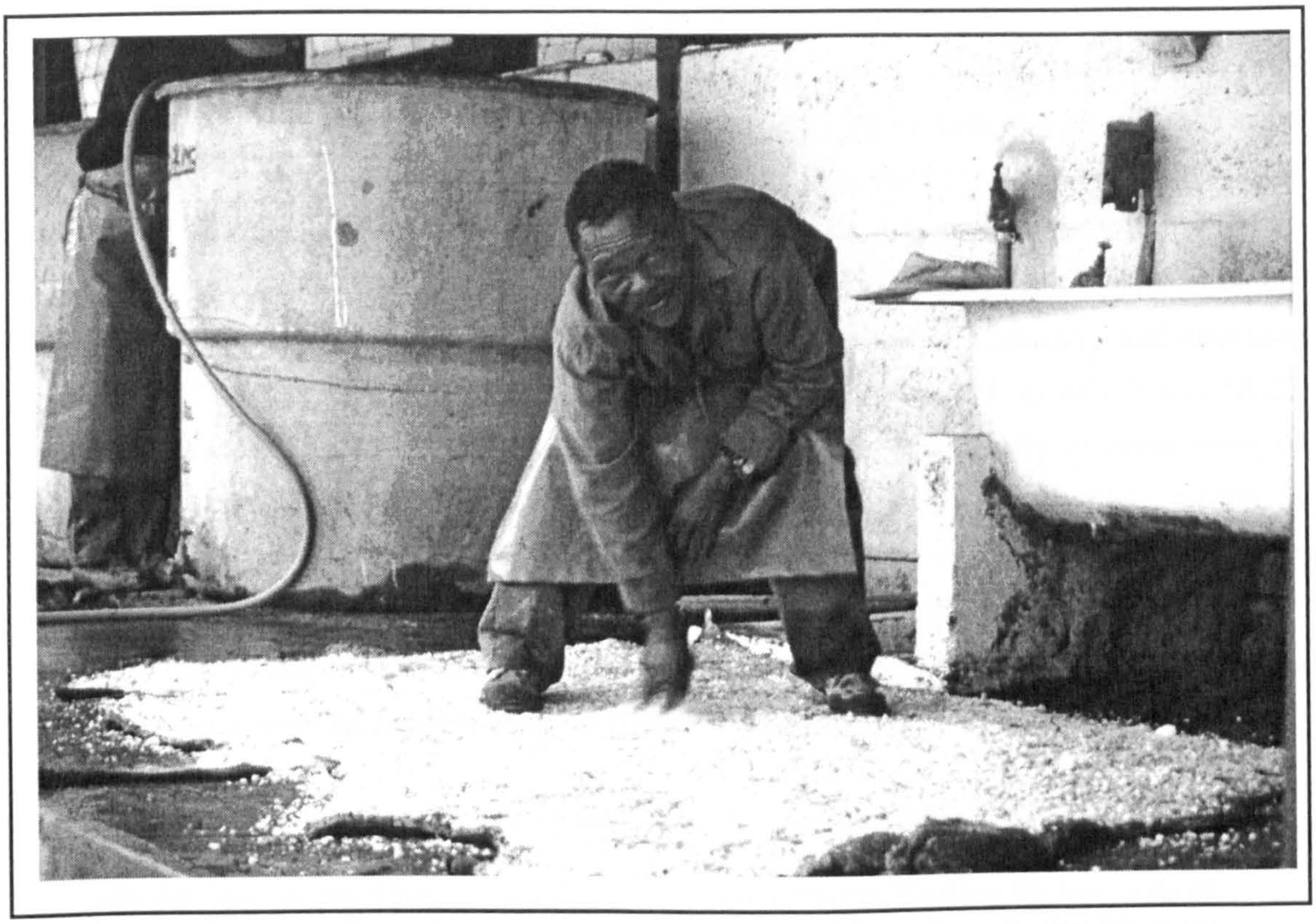

Plate 5.3: Mogodu (from Mababe) at work for a taxidermist in Maun.

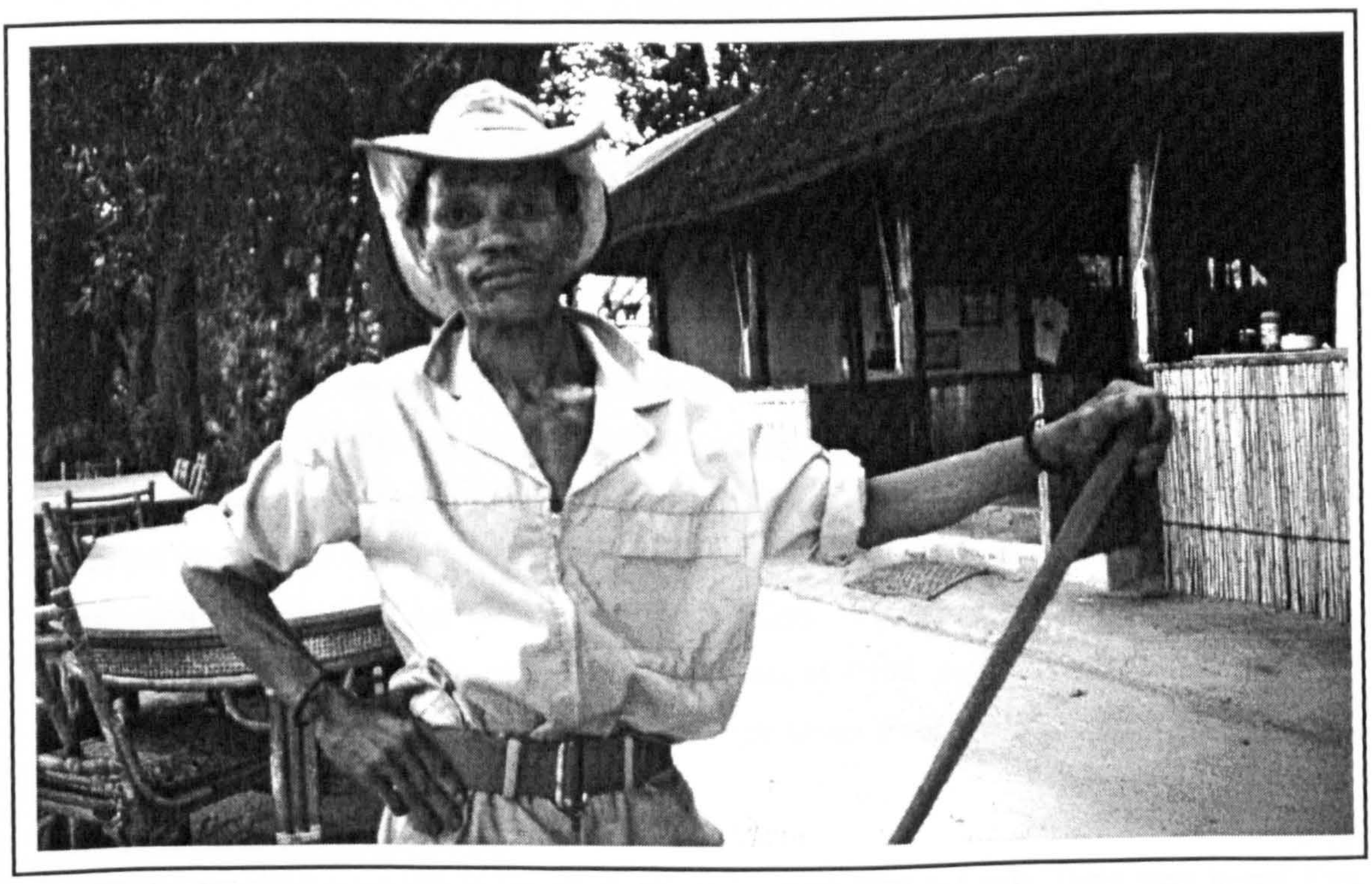

Plate 5.4: Kenny (from Khwai) at work in a lodge.

Entry into the labour market is thus difficult for Basarwa. In 1998, Khwai residents held only nine of the 74 non-management posts in the three lodges in the vicinity of Khwai. In the same year, one of the lodges began an explicit policy of *not* hiring staff from Khwai, claiming this would reduce 'staff problems'. Yet, Khwai is unique in having at least the opportunity of local employment. Residents of Mababe had the opportunity of only three locally-available formal jobs: night watchman at the healthpost; Family Welfare Educator; and borehole operator, while Gudigwa had none (although the lodges under OCT in NG22 and NG23 employed twenty Gudigwa residents in 1999). Beyond this, the rapidly growing town of Maun gives the nearest promise of employment. However, despite the evident wealth in Maun, the difficulty of securing employment makes it a promise that is more often than not empty. In an analogous fashion, natural resources are plentifully evident in the northern sandveld, but access to them is difficult. Idea Newe, a man in his 30s who struggles to run a small *semausu* (vending shop) in Mababe (Plate 5.6) explained their dilemma thus:

> Maun and here is the same, because there is no life in both. You need money in Maun, and there is nothing here, even though the veld is so full of food... . But now we are afraid to [go into the bush] because the government says it is breaking the law to do so... Some tribes (*merafe*) get their life is in the bush, like us. They are taking that life away.

For the residents of Khwai, Gudigwa and Mababe, as for many villages in Botswana, their security net lies in 'drought relief' programmes. For six hours per day, participants labour at local projects such as brick making (Plate 5.5), construction, or surfacing a sandy track with clay. The number of participants in drought relief work is a good indication of levels of employment for residents as the wages are so low (P1.00 per hour, less than half the minimum wage for formal employment) that it is only turned to as a last resort. Yet, an estimated eighty to ninety percent of Basarwa countrywide were dependent on such food for work programmes in the early 1990s (Hitchcock and Holm 1993). In 1998, Gudigwa had 149 people (virtually all the resident adults) regularly working on drought relief projects, compared to twelve for Mababe, and fourteen for Khwai. As this indicates, livelihood options are much more restricted for residents of Gudigwa. Like other citizens of Botswana, residents of the northern sandveld receive various other forms of government welfare. Since 1996, pensions have been given to over 65s, initially set at P100 per month, rising to P130 in 2000.[47] Pregnant or lactating mothers, and children under five, are given food supplements,

[47] Pensions are given according to the stated age on National Identity Cards. These were issued from 1988, with the holders' age generally estimated by a government official. An inordinate number of Basarwa had patently wrong age-estimates (usually underestimates), while some simply had 'not

and individuals classed as destitute are given a monthly allowance of rations. Furthermore, in the aftermath of CBPP, people classed as dependent on cattle, whether as owners or herders, were given a monthly food package as well, which included the whole of Gudigwa (649 rations to 117 households), but only two members of Khwai, and no-one in Mababe. While all citizens of Botswana are eligible for government welfare, what sets Basarwa apart in the receipt of government welfare is its comparative importance in the reproduction of most households. These combined sources of food touch virtually every family, and end up supporting a far wider network of people than those officially registered for them (Appendix Three gives an indication of welfare handouts in the northern sandveld).

While fewer women than men tend to have formal employment beyond low-paid jobs in lodges, women are more involved than men in informal means of generating income. Primary among these are basket weaving for sale to tourists (Plates 5.8, 5.9), and the brewing of alcohol for sale (primarily to men) within the village (Plate 5.10). Basket weaving is a skill most women have, and an activity that is easy to combine with others, such as child minding. Most weavers produce two to four baskets per month, which are sold for an average of P50 each to passing tourists. Brewing is an important redistributer of income on a village level, and an activity most women engage in on occasion. Unlike the pattern in many mixed villages in Botswana, where non-Basarwa are usually the sellers of alcohol to Basarwa (e.g. Twyman 1997:127, Ruigrok 1995:52), the very few non-Basarwa residents in Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa means that brewing is generally undertaken by Basarwa women.

Basarwa in the northern sandveld are, therefore, intimately involved in a cash economy, as they have been since the middle of the nineteenth century. For many, however, the only predictable form of income (in cash or kind) is government welfare. Employment is usually marked by unpredictability, as jobs come and go, excluding them (in their opinion) at times specifically because of the negative connotations of their ethnicity. Government interventions, such as drought relief, welfare and CBNRM are characteristically biased towards increasing income, perhaps a product of the universal association of capital with 'progress'. While increased economic opportunities are welcomed, they can become a point of contention when they curtail other activities, such as hunting and gathering. This issue becomes particularly pertinent in considering interventions associated with CBNRM (Chapter Seven).

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known' as their date of birth. Unless their identity card specifies an age over 65, they are not allowed to claim a pension.

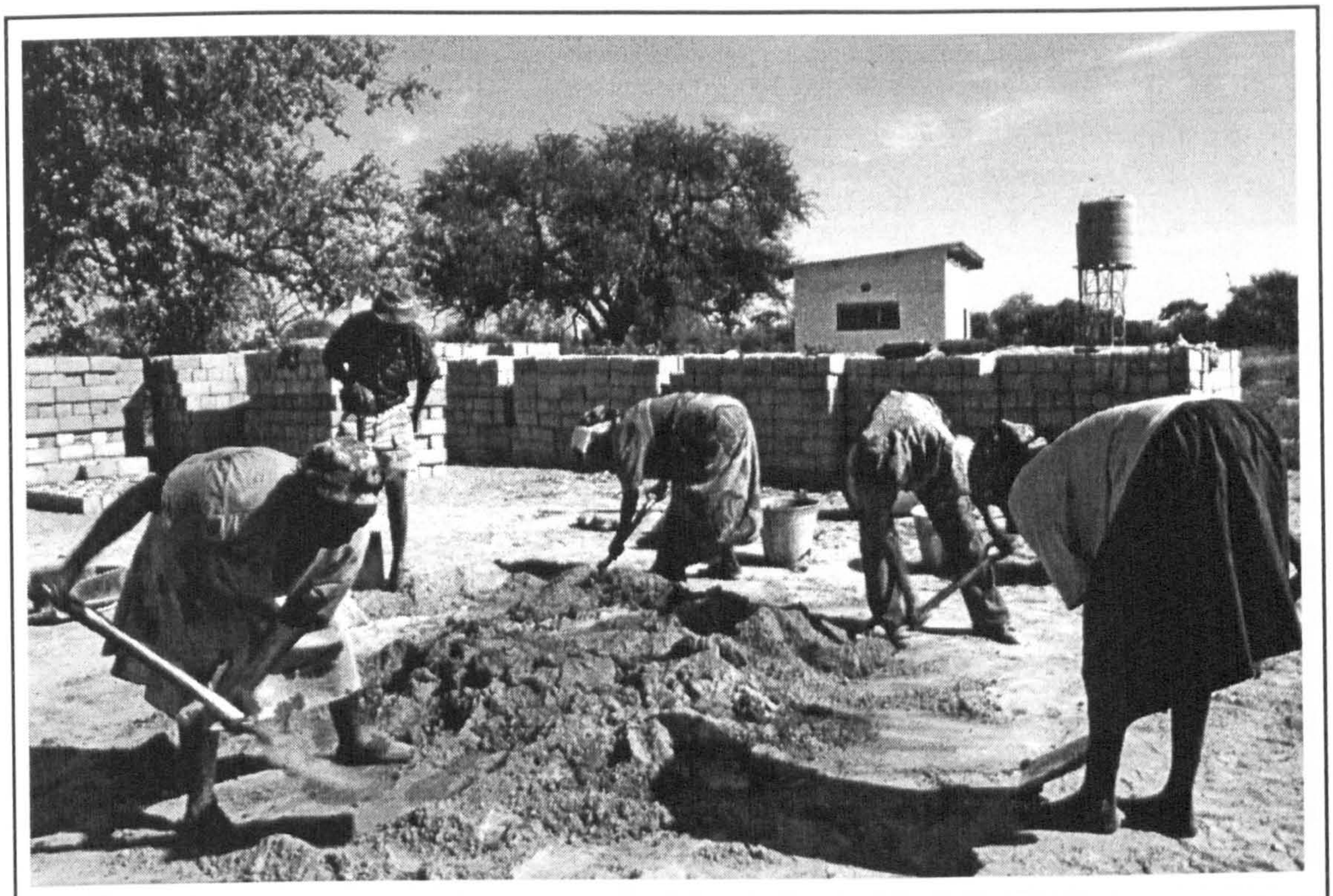


Plate 5.5: Drought relief work, Mababe.

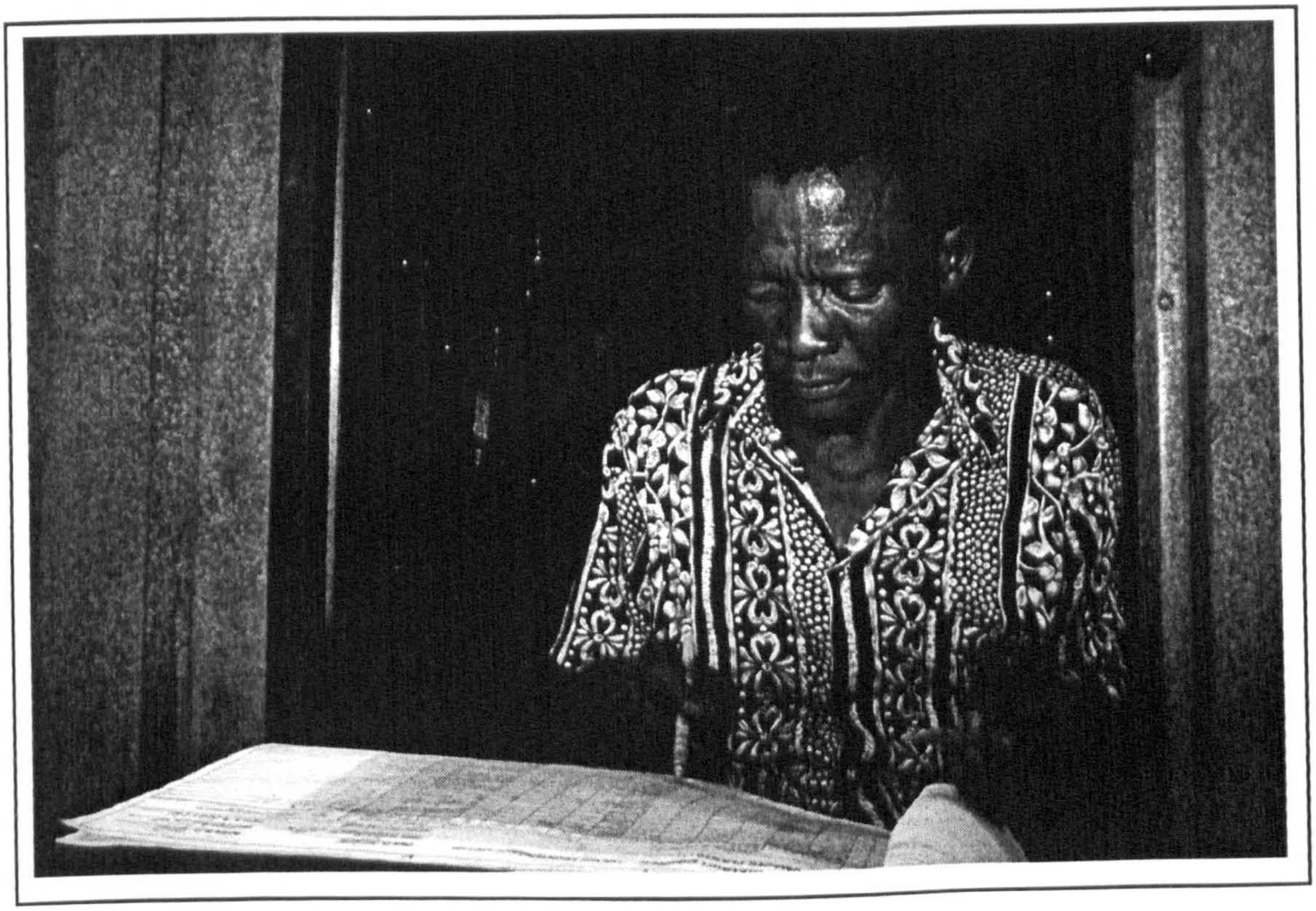
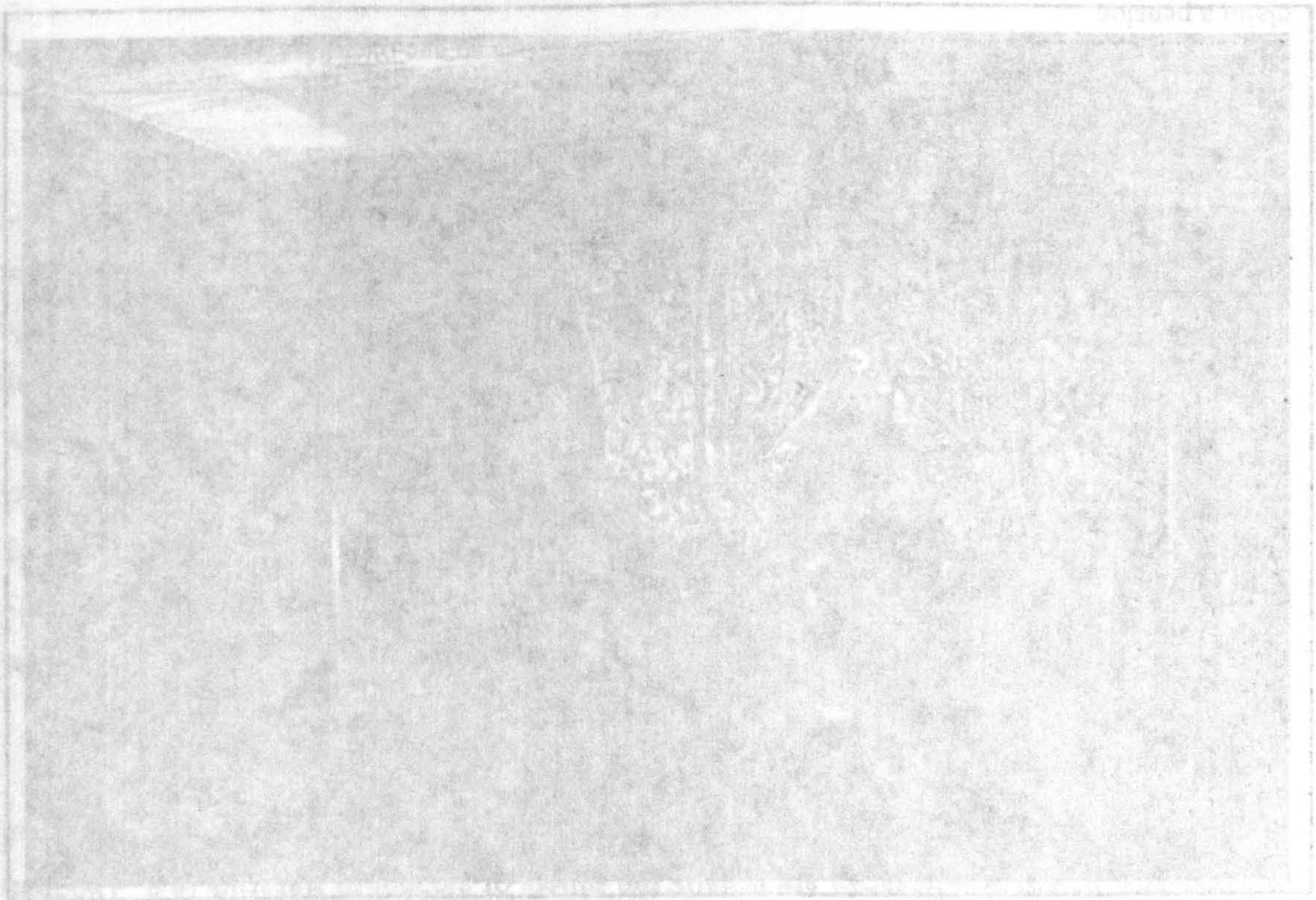
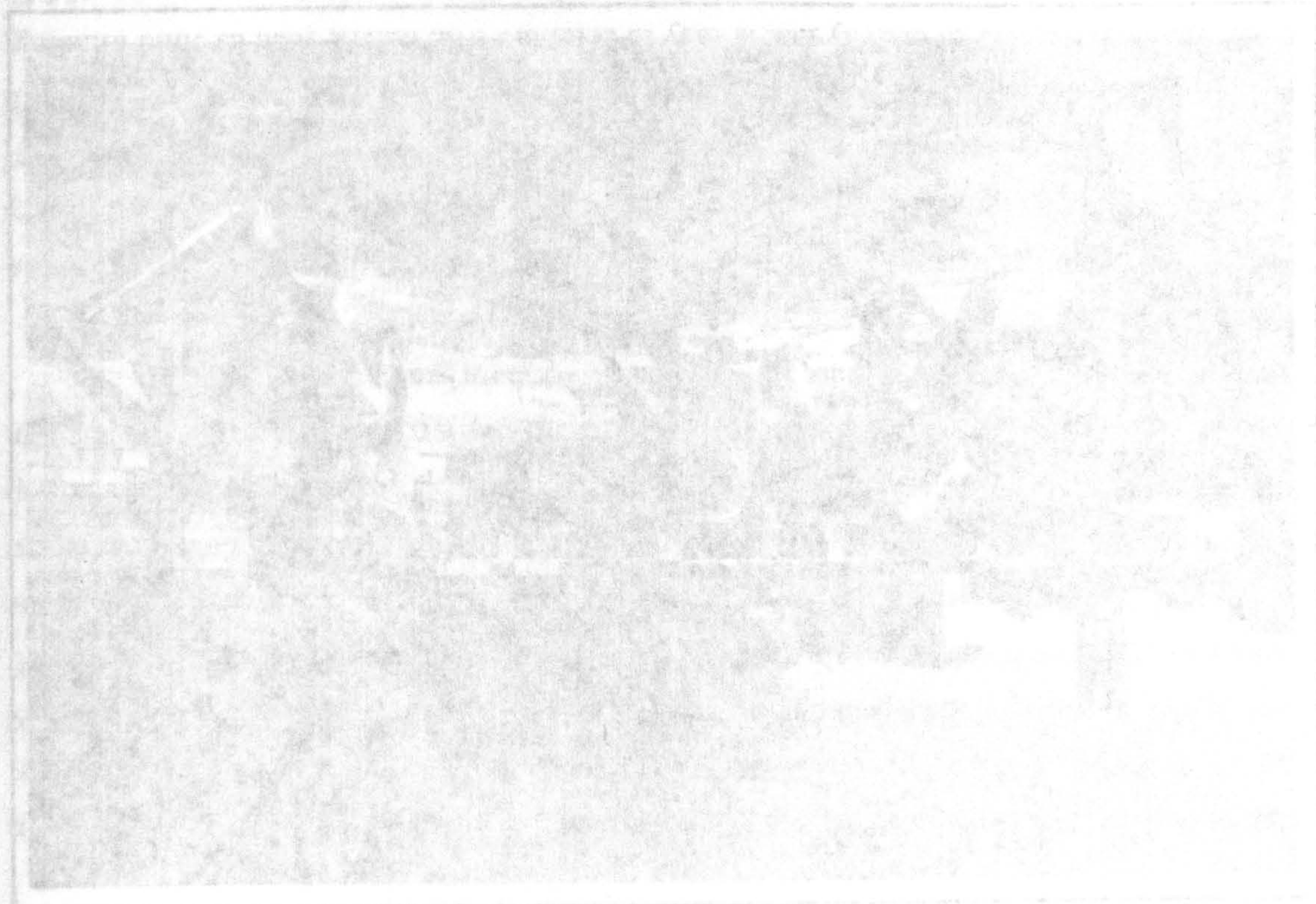


Plate 5.6: Idea, from Mababe in his *semausu* (vending shop).





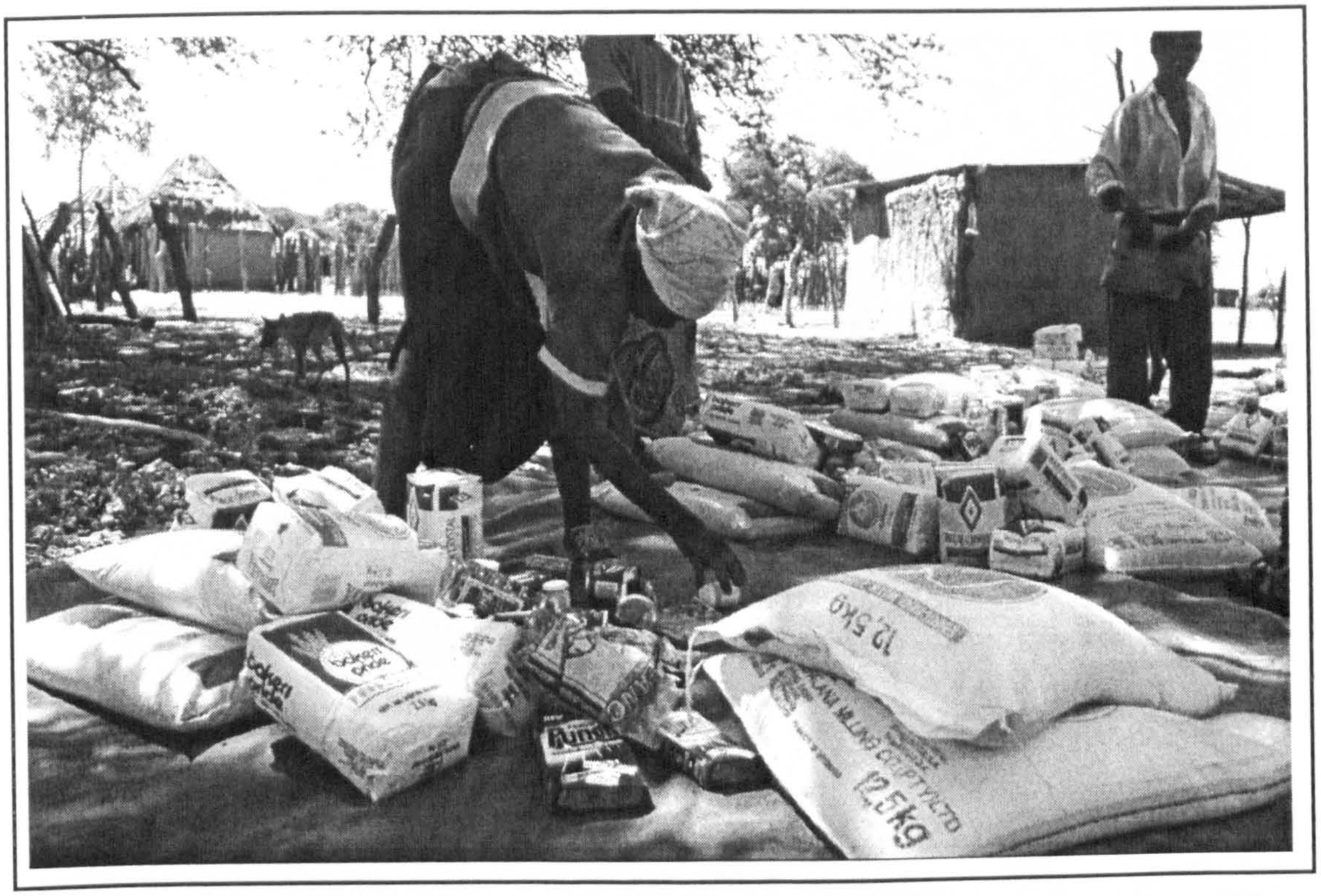


Plate 5.7: Monthly dispersal of destitute rations, Mababe.

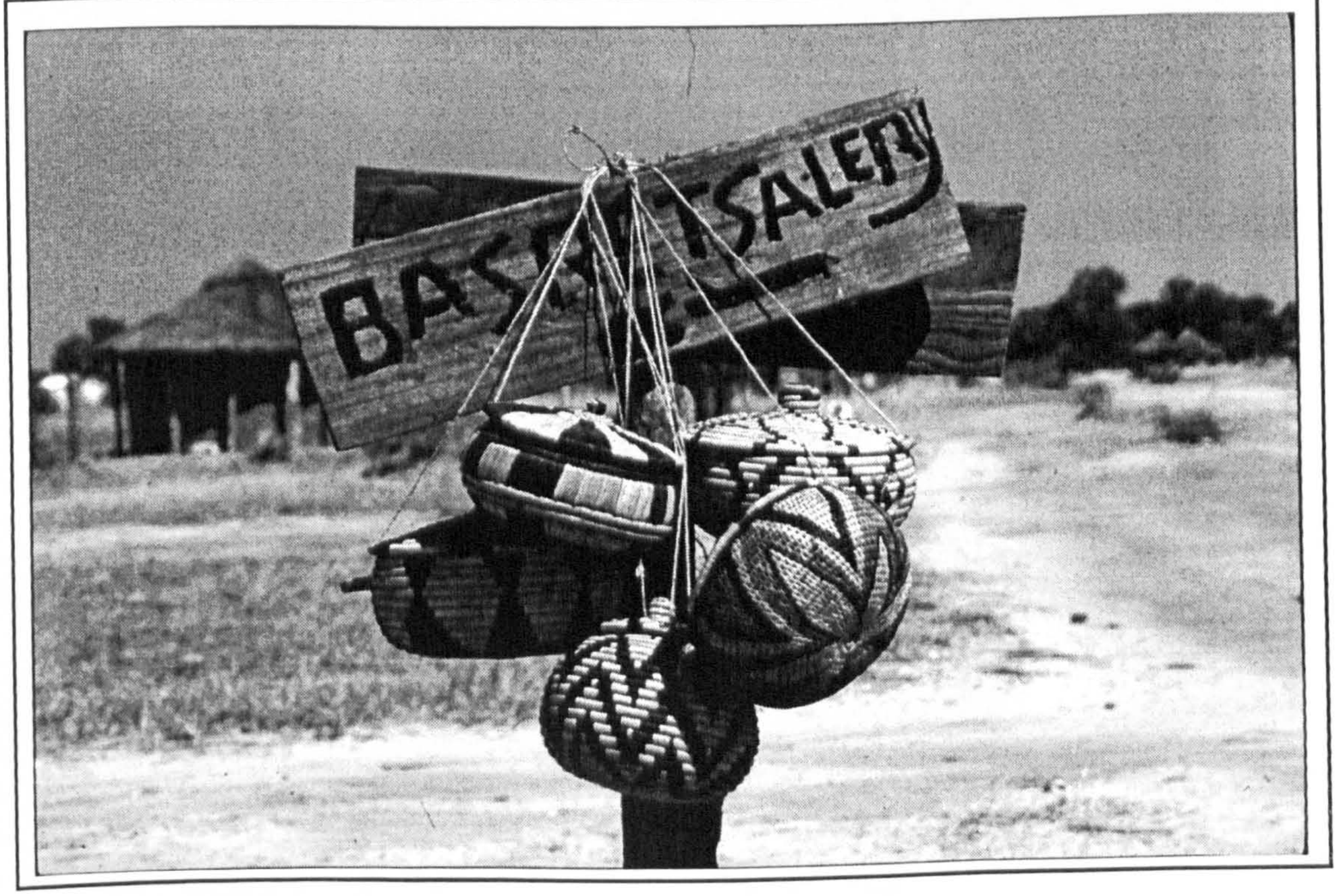
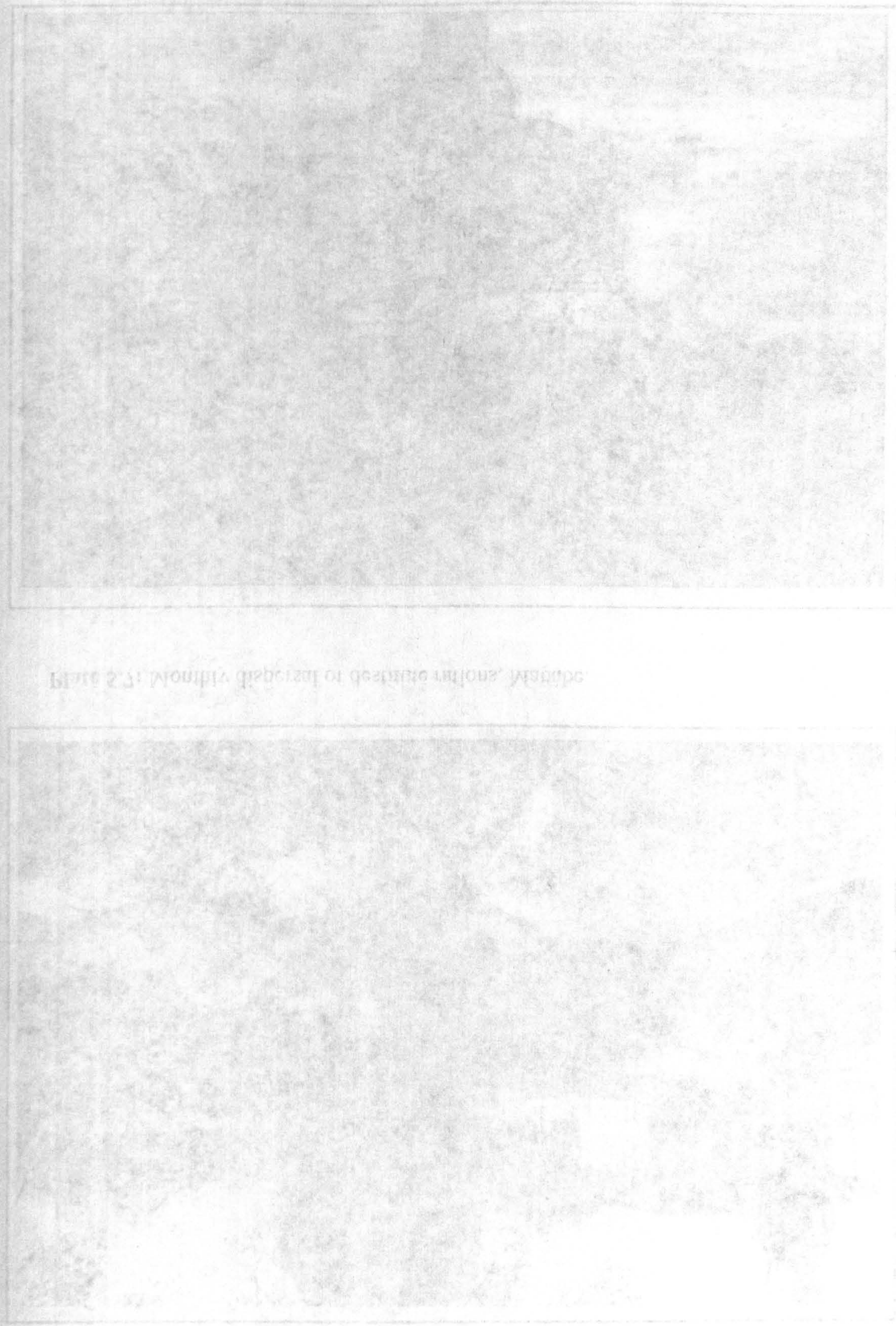


Plate 5.8: Baskets for sale to tourists on the roadside, Khwai.



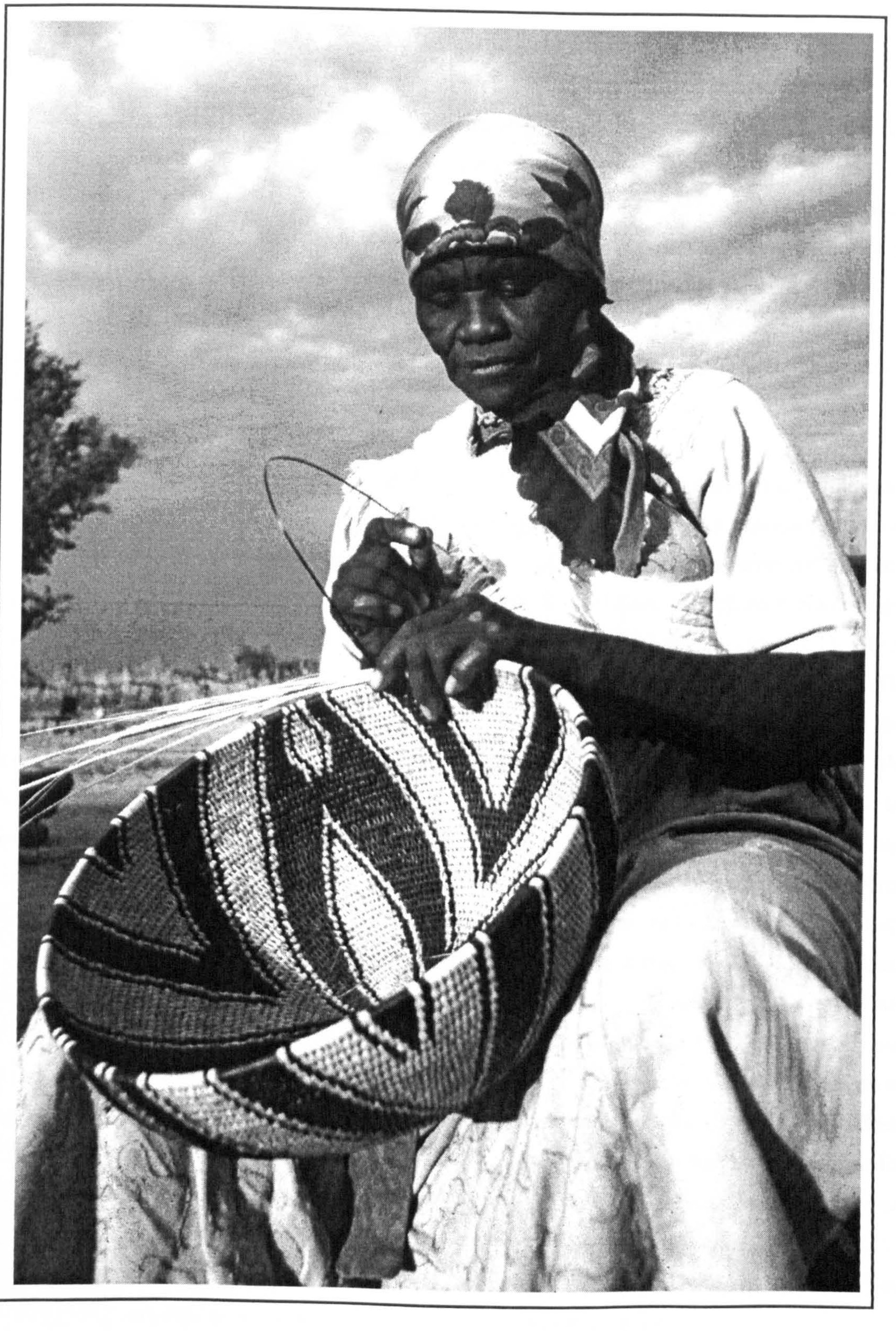
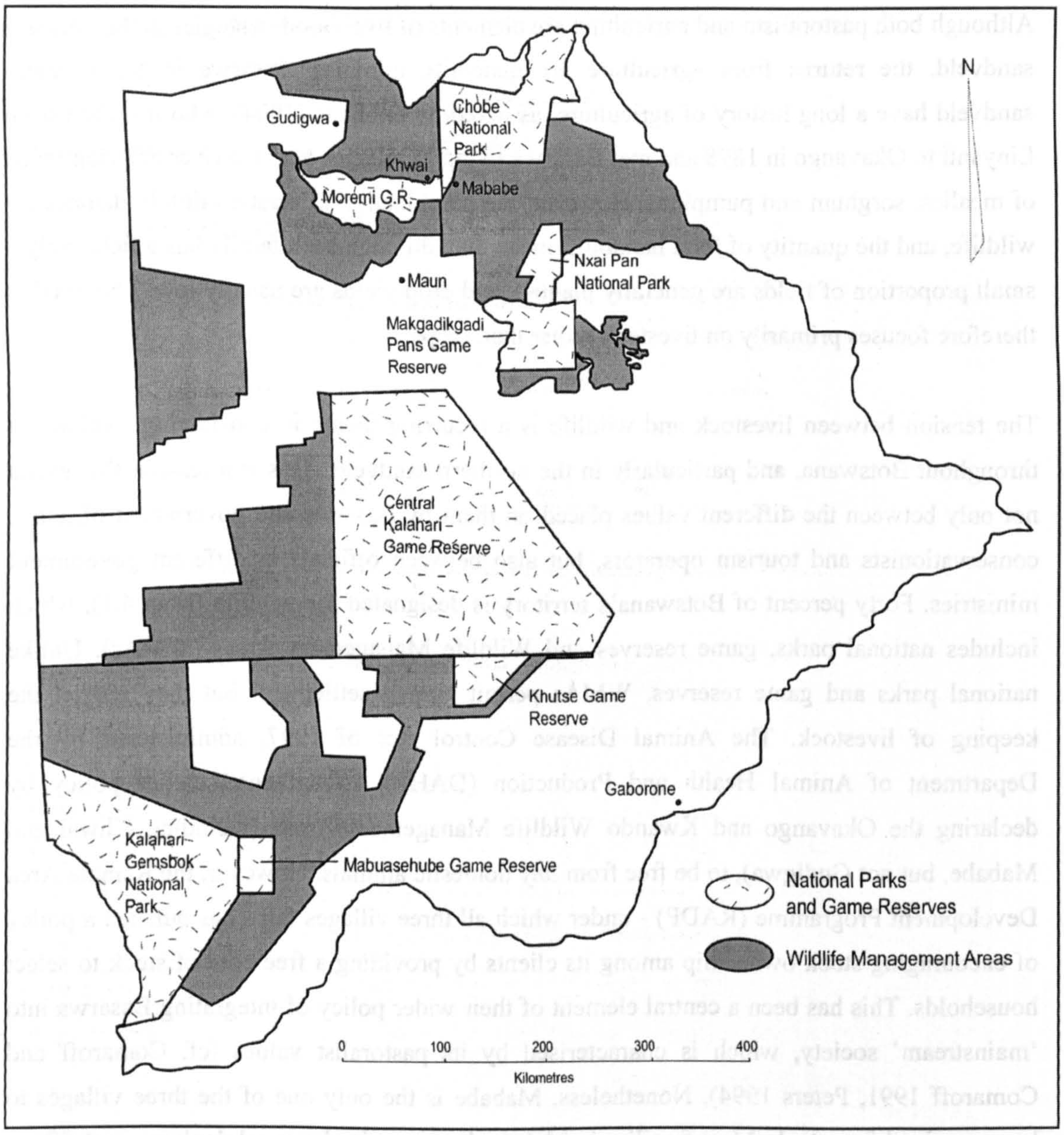


Plate 5.9: Mma Batlhalehi from Khwai weaving a basket.

Livestock

Although both pastoralism and agriculture are elements of livelihood strategies in the northern sandveld, the returns from agriculture are generally minimal. Basarwa in the northern sandveld have a long history of agriculture, as noted by Gibbons (1904), who travelled from Linyanti to Okavango in 1898 and met Basarwa living in villages near the river growing crops of mealies, sorghum and pumpkins. However, the combination of erratic rainfall, damage by wildlife, and the quantity of food handouts, mean that although each family has a field, only a small proportion of fields are generally planted, and crop yields are usually low. This section therefore focuses primarily on livestock rather than crops.

The tension between livestock and wildlife is a recurring theme in considering livelihoods throughout Botswana, and particularly in the northern sandveld. This is a tension that exists not only between the different values placed on them by Basarwa and government officials, conservationists and tourism operators, but also between officials in different government ministries. Forty percent of Botswana's territory is designated for wildlife (Map 4.1), which includes national parks, game reserves and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). Unlike national parks and game reserves, WMAs permit human settlement, but they restrict the keeping of livestock. The Animal Disease Control Act of 1997, administered by the Department of Animal Health and Production (DAHP), strengthened earlier policy by declaring the Okavango and Kwando Wildlife Management Areas (including Khwai and Mababe, but not Gudigwa), to be free from *any* domestic animals. However, the Remote Area Development Programme (RADP) - under which all three villages fall - has pursued a policy of encouraging stock ownership among its clients by providing a free core of stock to select households. This has been a central element of their wider policy of integrating Basarwa into 'mainstream' society, which is characterised by its pastoralist values (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 1991, Peters 1994). Nonetheless, Mababe is the only one of the three villages to have received free stock. Most families in Mababe have received several donkeys, and fifteen households were designated in 1998 to receive ten goats each. RADP had no such plans for Gudigwa or Khwai. Although DWNP has tolerated stock ownership in Mababe, they have not done so in Khwai, beyond dogs, chickens, and several donkeys. Khwai residents regard this discrepancy as part of a more general denial of services for Khwai (due to pressure from DWNP), in an attempt to move them away from their present location.



Map 5.1: Protected areas in Botswana (national parks, game reserves and WMAs).

The lack of assistance from RADP has not prevented some individuals from building up their own herds of livestock, a practice which stretches back long before the RADP came into existence in 1974. Wilmsen and Denbow (1990, Wilmsen 1989b) interpret archaeological evidence to indicate that Basarwa have been intermittent pastoralists since prehistoric times. Their interpretations remain contentious, however (Solway and Lee 1990, Sadr 1997, Lee

1998), and Basarwa in the northern sandveld maintain that although they had already been herding other people's stock for at least a century, they were unable to accumulate their own until the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Despite attempts by Batawana chiefs to tightly control the booming trade in wildlife products, some Basarwa were able to purchase guns through selling ivory, which they could then use to obtain more ivory to trade for cattle. Take, for example, this account by Sangando, who was born in about 1914, at Tsu//ao, northwest of Gudigwa:

> Lebelo was the first of our ancestors to raise cattle. His father, Montenyane, originated from Namibia, on the Angolan border. He came here, took a wife, and had Lebelo. Lebelo bought cattle from hunting elephants. Lebelo lived at Gunitsoga [on the northern arm of the Delta], and went visiting and hunting around Mbunda [Angola]. He died in the year of locusts [1924], and Monihe took his cattle and the gun.[48]

It was not until the 1970s, however, that cattle ownership became more consistent and spread beyond a few isolated individuals. The four families in Khwai that had cattle in 1998 started their herds by buying cattle with money earned at the South African mines, or locally in the safari industry. Three of these owners, Moitshoki, GB and Lekgoa, kept their cattle together at Shokomokwa, a cattle-post just south of the buffalo fence on the road to Khwai, where Lekgoa and his family moved to look after them. The fourth, Rra Diatla, bought six cattle in 1982 with a loan from the National Development Bank, which he paid back with his wages from working for the Civil Aviation Department. He paid a Moyei at Qukao P100 per month to look after them, and the herd grew to 40, before being reduced to nothing by drought, neglect and predators. The residents of Gudigwa, living outside an area zoned for wildlife, have had the additional option of accepting *mafisa*[49] cattle from non-Basarwa, an option chosen by three of the 13 cattle owners in Gudigwa before the CBPP cattle slaughter in 1996. Labelling the payment of a cow per year as 'exploitation', the three remaining cattle owners in 1998 chose not to continue *mafisa* relationships after the CBPP restocking.

The patterns of livestock ownership show marked variation over time, both historically, as illustrated by the example of Lebelo's cattle, and today, as indicated by the story of Lekgoa's herding fortunes. Lekgoa (one of Khwai's four cattle owners) grew up herding the cattle of

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[48] Monihe was the Motawana *molebeleedi* based at Seronga. He was responsible for collecting tribute from the area for the Batawana chieftainship, and died in the late 1920s. It is possible that the gun and some of the cattle actually belonged to Monihe, but were looked after by Lebelo, who hunted and herded on Monihe's behalf.

[49] *Mafisa* is a Setswana term for cattle entrusted to another person to herd. The herder generally has access to products such as milk or the meat of dead animals, but the progeny (except for a calf per year) generally remain the property of the owner.

his Bakgalagadi patrons. Although his family had 'belonged' to them for several generations, it was not until his own generation that his patrons began paying them a cow per year for herding, which he kept with their cattle. In the early 1960s, he went to work on the mines in South Africa for eight years, and on his return found that his cattle had multiplied to fifteen. To these, he added another six bought with earnings from the mines. He returned to work on the mines, but when he came back home, he found that all his cattle had been killed by tsetse. Lekgoa then moved to Khwai, and began working for DWNP. In 1982 he invested some of his salary in a cow he bought from a Herero man. He kept it with two cattle that each of his older brothers had bought. Using his wages, he slowly began building his herd up again. He kept them this time at Shokomokwa, where he had an arrangement with a Moyei cattle owner to water his cattle at his borehole in return for contributions to diesel expenses. By the time of the CBPP slaughter in 1996, Lekgoa had 36 cattle in his herd (almost half of which belonged to close relatives) for which he received 12 cattle and P12,000 in compensation in 1997.

The vagaries of stock ownership are also demonstrated by the example of Mababe, illustrated in Fig. 5.1 overleaf. Each of the 29 households[50] in the village was asked in June 1998 how many cattle, donkeys and goats they presently owned, as well as how many they had owned at any time in the past generation. The graphs illustrate past and present stock ownership for the 21 households that had owned stock (eight households stated that they had never owned stock in the past generation). According to their responses, every single one of the 21 households had owned more stock sometime during the last generation than they owned in June 1998. While six families had owned cattle, only one still did in June 1998, and although 21 households had owned goats, only nine still had them. A similar pattern is demonstrated for donkeys; of the 17 who had owned them, only seven still did. The most common reason given for losing livestock in Mababe was predation by hyenas, lions and leopards.

As these examples illustrate, raising livestock is, and has been, an unpredictable exercise. This has been true for not only Mababe, but is confirmed by similar examples of Basarwa elsewhere owning and losing sometimes spectacular numbers of stock (e.g. Lee 1979:409 for Dobe, Wiley 1976:3 for Bere). This is an unpredictability Basarwa face to a greater degree than non-Basarwa. While environmental factors (drought, predators, tsetse) are no respecters of ethnic labels, there are additional socially-induced factors that Basarwa have to contend

[50] A 'household' was designated as the occupants of a spatially distinct cluster of huts. Household size in Mababe varied between one and 25, with the average being 8.8 occupants.

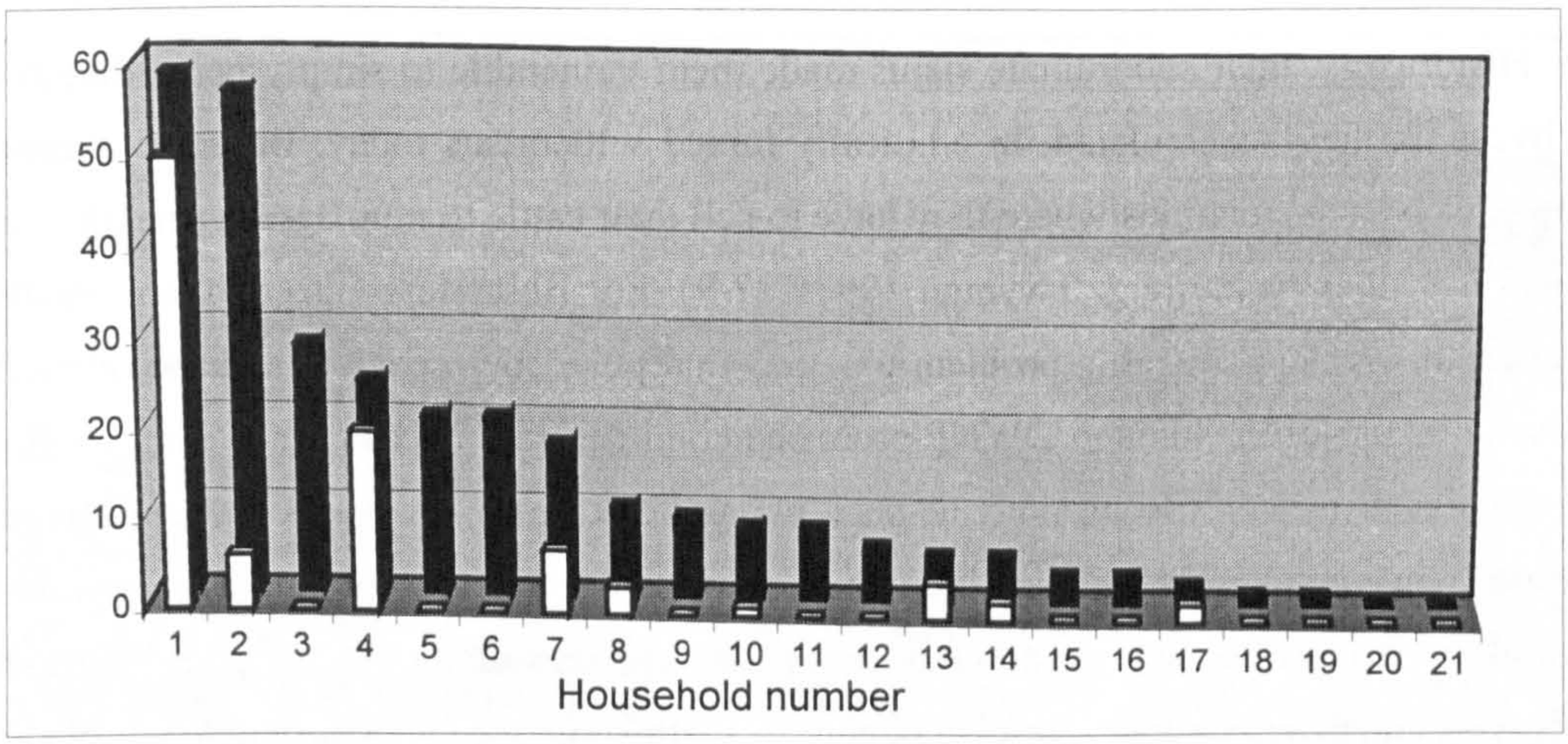

Figure 5.1.a: *Goat* ownership for 21 households in Mababe (dark bars for ownership in past generation, light bars for ownership June 1998).

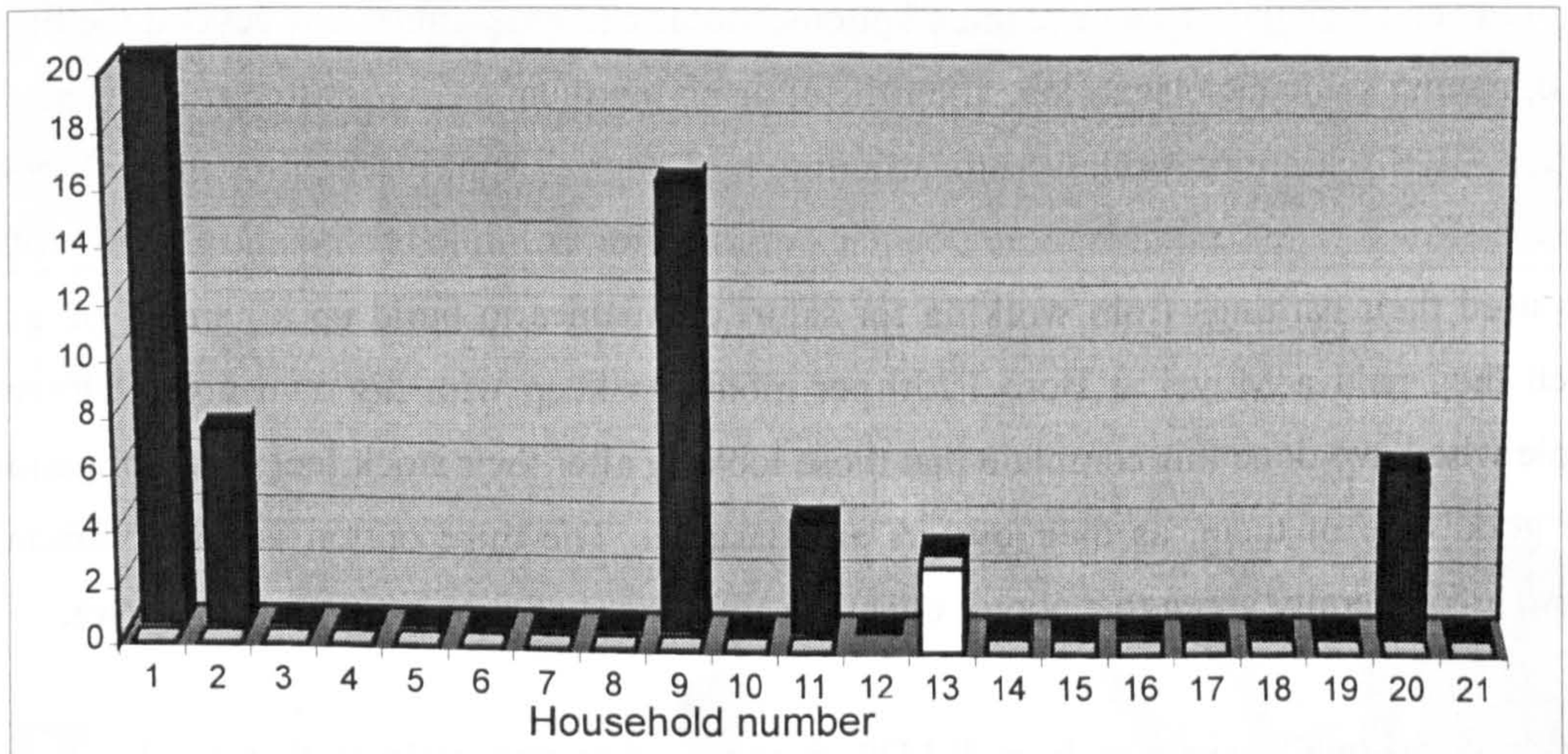

Figure 5.1.b: *Cattle* ownership for 21 households in Mababe (dark bars for ownership in past generation, light bars for ownership June 1998).

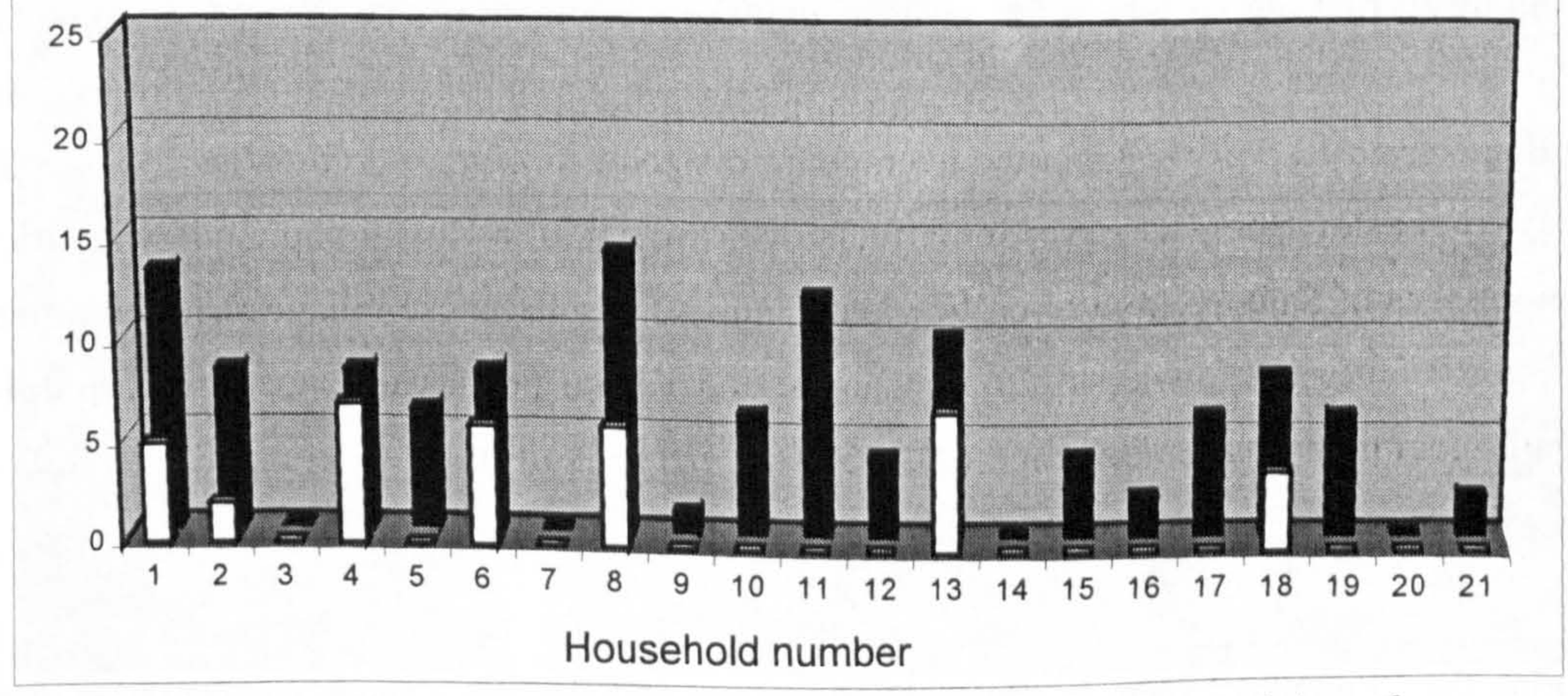

Figure 5.1.c: *Cattle* ownership for 21 households in Mababe (dark bars for ownership in past generation, light bars for ownership June 1998).

with. Historically, their subordinate status made them vulnerable to simply being divested of any livestock they accumulated. In ethnically mixed settlements today, Basarwa commonly find themselves in situations where they have to sell their cattle to non-Basarwa neighbours at a fraction of their value (e.g. Twyman 1997:127-9). For Basarwa in the northern sandveld, however, this is not as much a problem today as that posed by predators and the restrictions imposed on land-use. Although DWNP promised compensation in cash for livestock killed or fields damaged by wildlife, in practice such claims took up to two years to be received, or were not received at all.[51] The resources necessary to pay for and maintain a borehole and pump elsewhere are beyond most Basarwa, so they are also limited to watering livestock at their own village water supply, or else paying to share someone else's borehole. Only Khwai – where no livestock are tolerated – is near permanent surface water. Residents of Khwai who want to keep stock therefore have three options: moving to look after them beyond the buffalo fence; paying someone else to look after them; or giving them as *mafisa* to a trusted friend or relative. The first option, followed for example by Lekgoa's family, requires the willingness to leave Khwai. The second is more popular - chosen, for example by Joe and Sisko, brothers who used their earnings from working for safari companies to build up a herd of 62 goats, which they paid a Moyei at Boro P250 per month to keep with his own goats. However, people who have done this complain that those looking after their stock feel little obligation to take good care of them, as their owners are Basarwa. The third option is not common, as *mafisa* are generally given to a poorer client – a small pool of people for most Basarwa.

Despite occasional assistance from RADP, it is therefore unsurprising that levels of stock-ownership are significantly lower for non-Basarwa than for Basarwa. Table 5.1 compares cattle ownership for Gudigwa with the four other non-Basarwa villages under Okavango Community Trust, all of which are on land that faces no restrictions on stock keeping. Not only does Gudigwa have significantly less cattle per capita, but also a smaller proportion of the village are cattle owners, and the average herd size of those that do own cattle is smaller. A study by Lesley Boggs (1996) comparing stock ownership in Khwai and Gudigwa with the Bayei villages of Sankuyu and Shorobe yielded similar results; these villages had ten times as much per capita stock ownership than Mababe and Khwai (with cattle:goats weighted 4:1). Overall, Ngamiland had an average of 1.06 cattle per person in 1999, compared to 0.03 for Gudigwa.

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[51] During the 15 months I spent in Khwai, Gudigwa and Mababe, not a single compensation cheque was received, although there were over ten outstanding claims. This was a matter of constant complaint in meetings with government officials. Although compensation was always promised, DWNP is technically not obliged to compensate for stock loss or property damage in Khwai and Mababe, being situated in Wildlife Management Areas.

Plate 5.10: Tending a small field, Khwai.

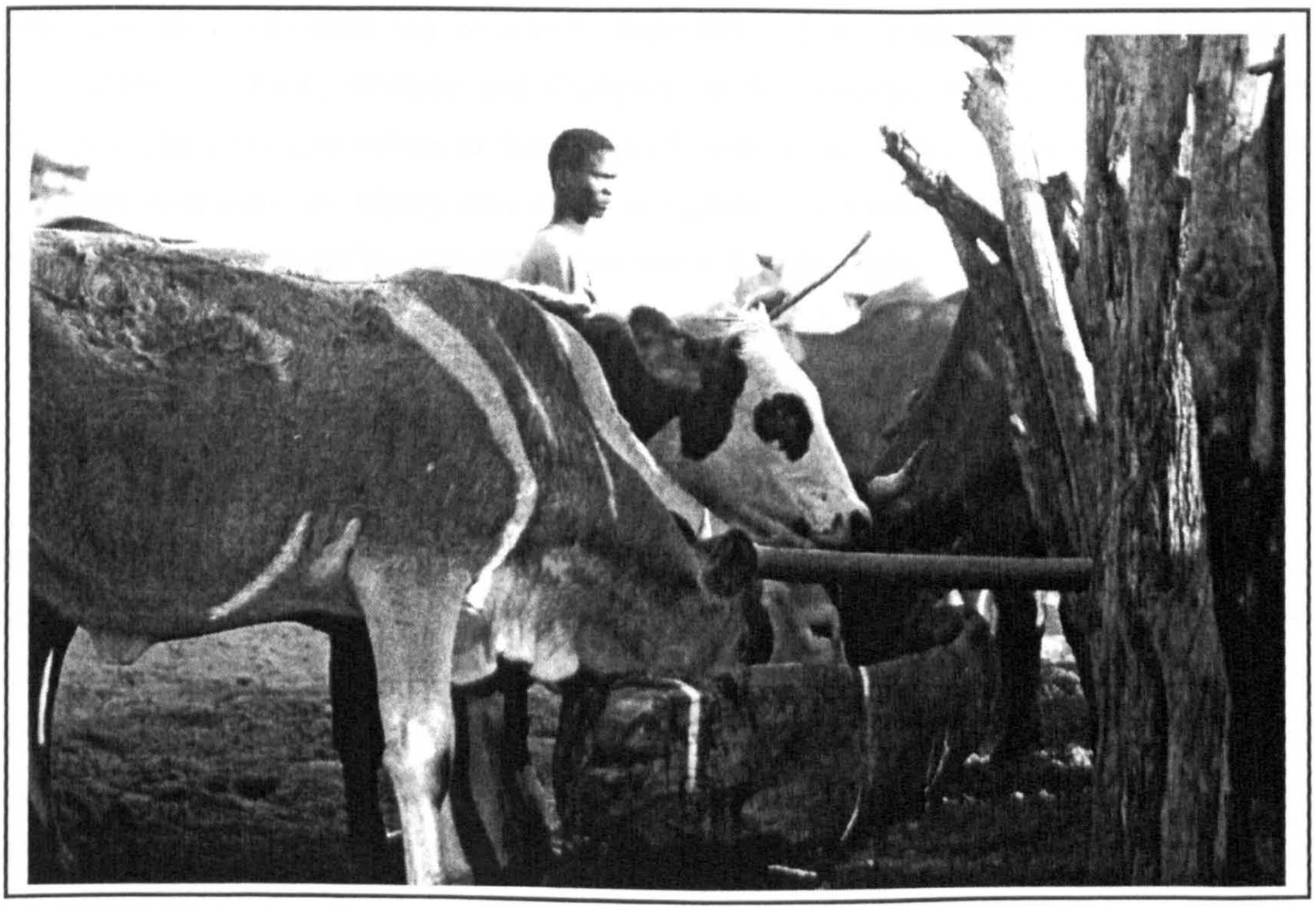


Plate 5.11: Watering cattle, Gudigwa.

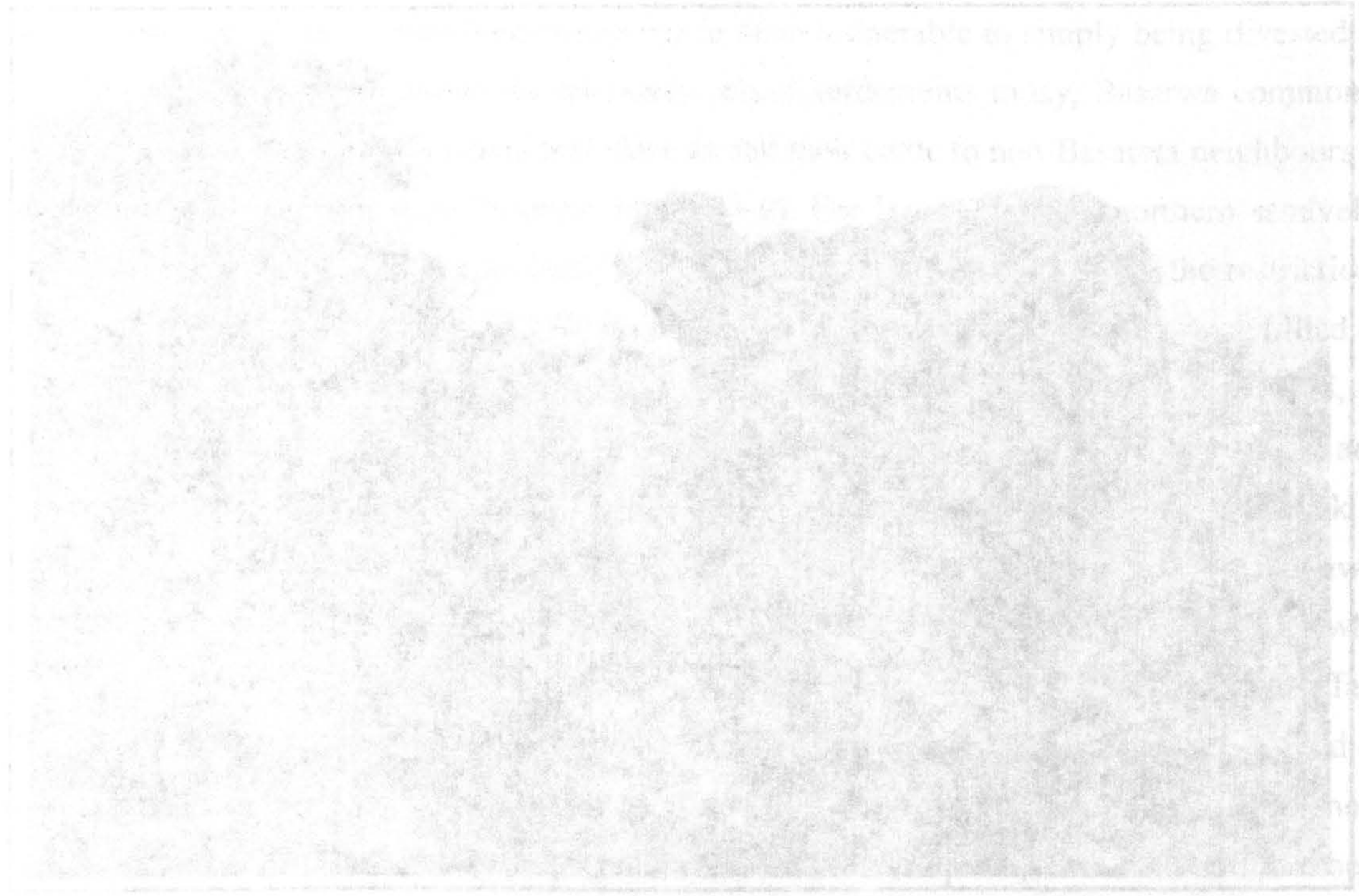
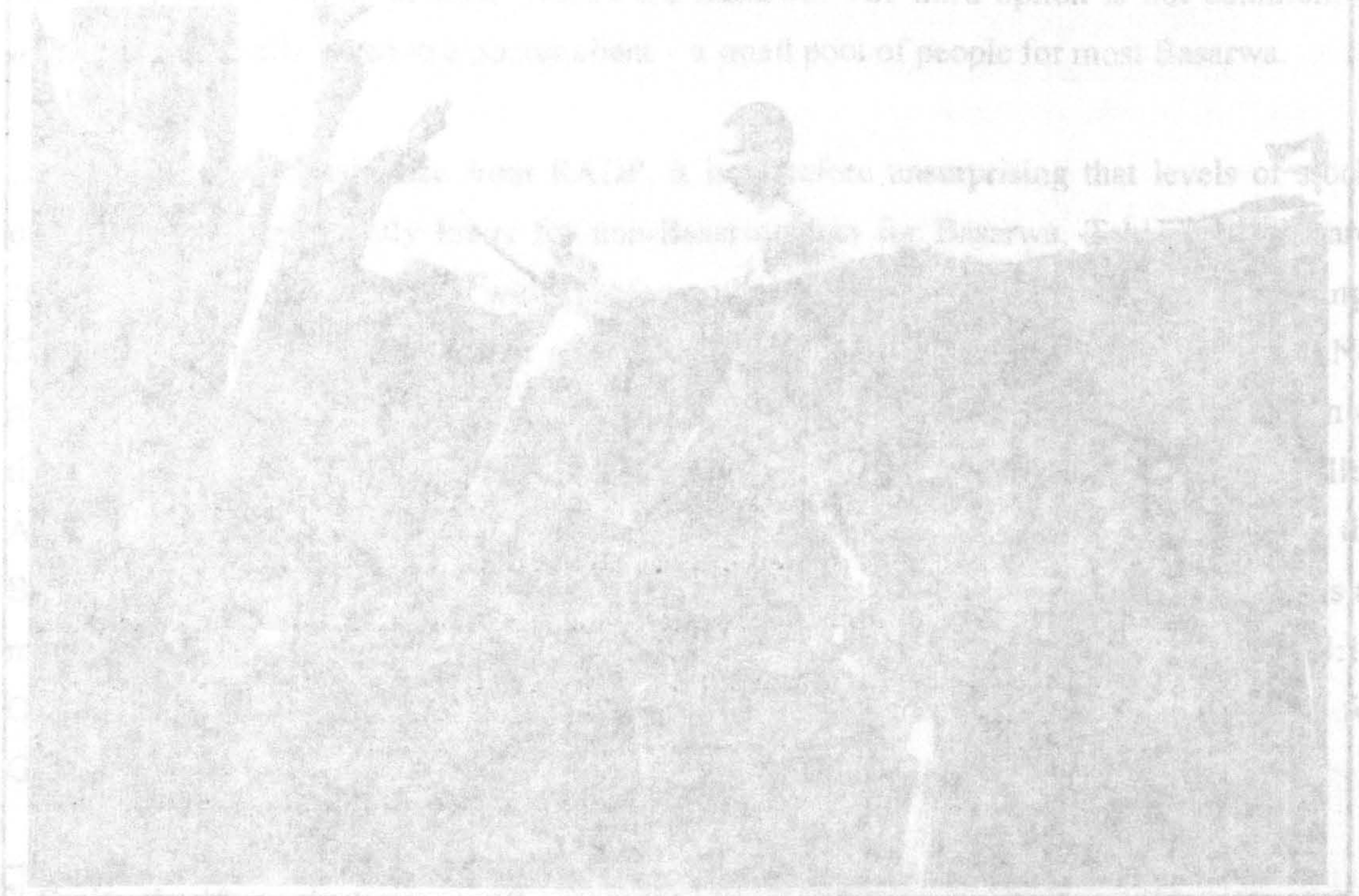


Plate 5.1(b): Tending a small field, Kbwai



	Population	Number of cattle	Number of cattle owners	Percentage of population owning cattle	Average number of cattle per owner	Average number of cattle per resident
Gudigwa	442	14	3	0.7 %	4.7	0.03
Beetsha	1116	150	27	2.4 %	5.6	0.13
Eretsha	428	349	46	10.7 %	7.6	0.82
Gunitshoga	166	549	42	25.3 %	13.1	3.31
Seronga	2524	1402	110	4.4 %	12.7	0.56

Table 5.1: Comparative stock ownership for villages on the northern arm of the Okavango Delta, 1998.[52]

Despite low levels of ownership, livestock - especially cattle - is strongly desired by most of the residents of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa, as by Basarwa elsewhere (e.g. Twyman 1997:126). The dominant values in Botswana of cattle as a symbol of not only wealth, but also proper humanity are highly pervasive, as apparent in a comment to me by Motsamai Mpho, the Moyei leader of the opposition Botswana People's Party:

> If cattle are good for people, why give Basarwa animals? Hunting was good enough for Basarwa in the past, but they remained poor. Let them instead get used to what will last longer.

Some Basarwa - especially younger men - express similar views themselves. However, the desire for cattle is not simply an adoption of dominant values. Cattle perform some important livelihood functions that legislation has *prevented* wildlife from performing. Livestock are an important source of investment that can be sold when money is needed, or killed on an occasion such as a funeral. Wildlife could provide meat on demand for such events, but as funerals are now often public events, the risk of being accused of poaching is high. For the

[52] Population data taken from census estimates, 1997. Cattle numbers taken from unpublished DAHP census, April 1998. Figures for Eretsha include cattlepost of Ndorotsha, and for Seronga include cattleposts of Letsau, Teekae, Mawana and Dungu.

same reason, trophies such as skins that have a cash value are usually buried where the animal is killed, to destroy incriminating evidence. Despite legislation, the use of wildlife for subsistence on a day-to-day basis is easier, as this can be hidden. As would be expected, therefore, livestock are generally preserved for emergencies, and not killed for day-to-day subsistence, a pattern common to Basarwa livestock owners elsewhere (e.g. Murray 1976 for CKGR).

The implications of legislation restricting access to wildlife, accompanied by an intangible, yet very powerful, package of dominant values in which cattle symbolise 'development', even 'humanity', therefore combine to create an environment in which cattle are a more viable livelihood proposition than wildlife:

> Cattle are better than animals, because animals make you go to jail. If hunting was allowed, we would try to have both. I want our children to live off cattle, because animals are owned [*go ruiwa*] by the law [*molao*], so they cannot live off animals (*Morena Motoloki, one of the three cattle-owners in Gudigwa in 1998*).

Nonetheless, statements such as this are as much protests against restrictive legislation on the utilisation of wildlife as indications of individuals embracing a 'cattle culture'. Perhaps partly *because* of these restrictions, narratives on livelihoods often stress the importance of wildlife, to which I now turn.

Wildlife

A wide variety of natural resources are regularly used by residents of the northern sandveld for subsistence, sale or medicinal purposes: from thatching grass to the seeds of *phuka* grass (***pĩ***; Aerograstas natalensis); *tswii* water lily roots (***adi***, Nymphaea nouchali var. caerulea); wild spinach (***boko/xono,*** Amaranthus thunbergii); *mongongo* nuts (***/qom,*** Ricinodendron rautanenii); and a variety of fruit, like *mogwana* (***du-/om*** Grewia bicolor) berries for brewing *khadi*. However, I focus here on wildlife rather than plant resources, for two reasons. Firstly, the volume of food handed out in the northern sandveld, which is primarily carbohydrates, has reduced the quantity and diversity of gathered food. Nonetheless, the minimal protein in these handouts means that other sources of protein are still avidly sought. Secondly, the legal restrictions on hunting are more strictly enforced, and more comprehensive, than on other natural resources. Wildlife, therefore, has become a primary symbol of contestation between Basarwa and *molao* (law), although it represents a wider contestation over land and plant resources as well as wildlife.

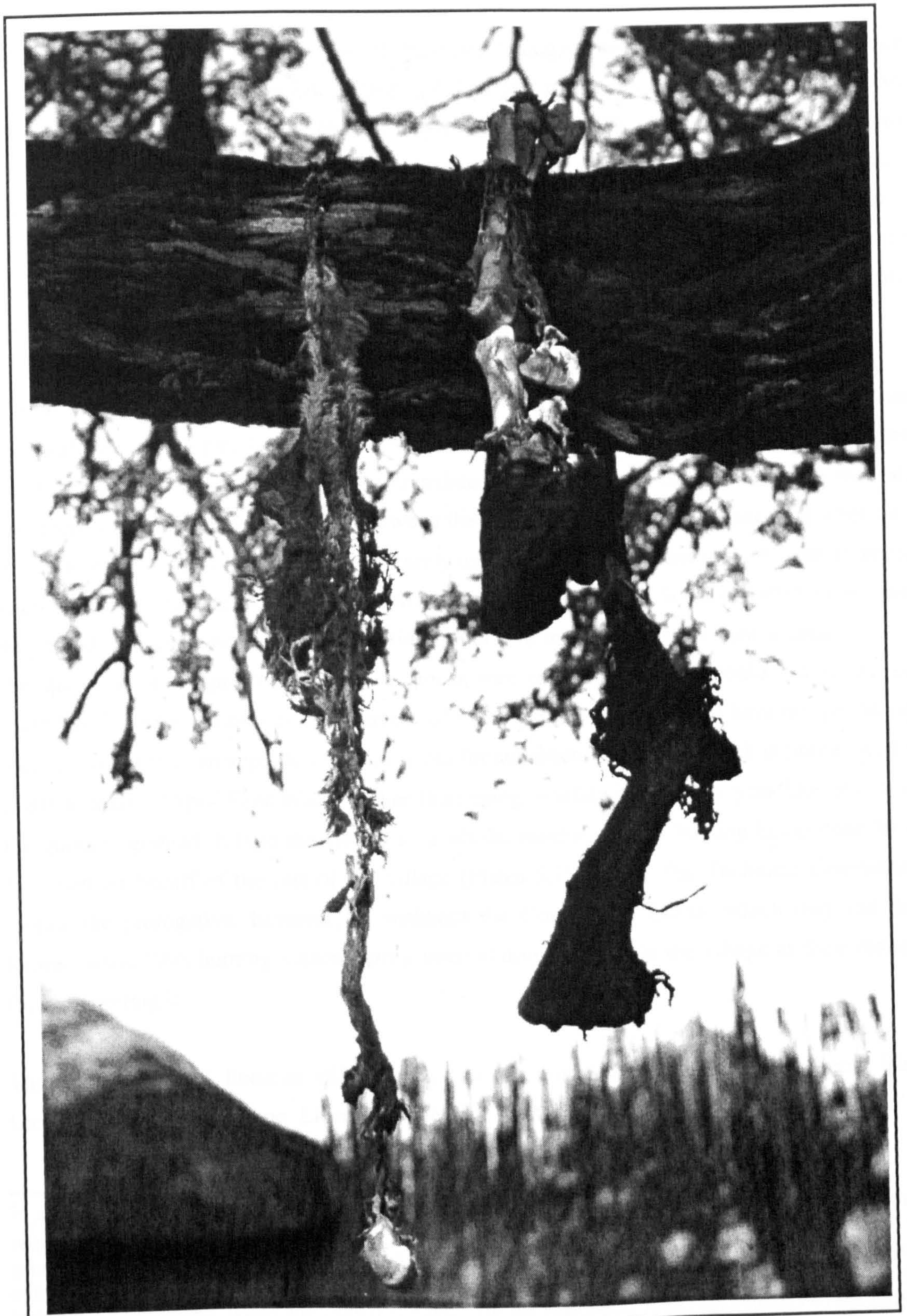


Plate 5.12: Remains of a donkey in Khwai, awaiting compensation from DWNP.

Until 1995/6, the residents of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa were eligible for Special Game Licences (SGLs). These were issued from 1979 as part of the Unified Hunting Regulations, allowing households which were classed as dependent on wildlife an annual quota of animals that could be hunted year-round. SGLs were introduced in part to legitimise subsistence hunting by Basarwa, a practice that had been regarded as illegal, but generally tolerated.[53] When the Community Quota System came into operation under CBNRM, SGLs were rescinded. However, the number of animals given in the Community Quota is significantly less than the sum of animals of all the SGL holders for the village (Appendix Four).

One of the main reasons for moving from an SGL to a Community Quota system, was that SGLs allowed 'biologically unsustainable' levels of offtake (Hitchock n.d.:4). As SGLs were inefficiently monitored, in practice they translated to a free licence to hunt what one wanted, and there was often little correlation between the animals stated on the license, and what was actually hunted. The full quota was very rarely used, but specific quotas on particular animals, such as buffalo and eland (which were removed from Ngamiland's SGLs in 1991) were often surpassed. The existence of a legal hunting quota also made it easier to hunt animals not on the quota, such as giraffe, as once the meat was cut into strips, it could not easily be identified.[54] Under the new system introduced with CBNRM, villages that have not yet set up a community trust can apply to use their quota for subsistence hunting, which is limited to the hunting season (April-September), rather than being available the whole year like SGLs. If the quota is granted, it is to the village as a whole, resulting in the hunting being done by a few men on behalf of the rest of the village (Plates 5.17, 5.18). The Technical Committee retains the prerogative, however, to withhold the Community Quota, which they did for Khwai in the 1998 hunting season, citing internal divisions within the village as their reason for not granting it.

The only individual licences still available in the northern sandveld in 1998 were Bird Licences, and Small Game Licences. The first cost P5.00 per year in 1998, allowing a

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[53] According to the Fauna Conservation Proclamation Act of 1961, Part III, Section 15, any hunting required the granting of a licence or permit. However, Act No 4 ('Extent of application of proclamation'), amended by Act 47 of 1967, allowed hunting on state land 'by a person belonging to a community which is entirely dependent for its living on hunting and gathering veld produce, and who is himself a dependent, where the animal is hunted for the reasonable food requirements of the hunter or of the members of the community to which he belongs' (Point 3). Nonetheless, law enforcement officials did not often seem to be aware of this exemption (cf. Wily 1974:20-21).

[54] Stories are sometimes told, with much hilarity, of individuals who sold giraffe meat under the noses of DWNP officials – or even *to* DWNP officials – under the pretence that it was the meat of an animal listed on their SGLs. Many Basarwa state giraffe as their favourite meat, although it is listed as a protected species.

selection of ducks and other birds within specified seasons, the second covered duiker and steenbok – the smallest ungulates – and cost P0.25 per animal.[55] Generally, only shotgun owners bought Bird Licences, and few bothered with Small Game Licences, the amount of meat they yielded being small compared to the time taken to hunt them and the cost of shotgun cartridges. Most duiker and steenbok were therefore caught with wire snares, which is illegal, and thus not covered by Small Game Licenses. Residents could also apply, alongside other citizens, for a selection of licenses for single large animals that are raffled to applicants each hunting season. These licenses are, however, expensive, and can only be hunted in designated CHAs. This is thus not an option that many Basarwa pursue.

Hunting options under the formal licensing system are therefore very restricted. Yet, many Basarwa consider game meat to be an essential part of their diet. Game meat has long been an important part of the diet of many Batswana, and Batawana chiefs had Basarwa and Bayei hunters that hunted on their behalf from the early nineteenth century (Andersson 1856). In the mid-1970s, von Richter and Campbell (1975:3) estimated that sixty percent of the protein eaten in Botswana derived from wildlife, although the restrictions imposed by the Unified Hunting Regulations in 1979 subsequently decreased this proportion. In Botswana as a whole, meat consumption (now usually beef) is high, and it is often eaten daily. Within this national 'meat culture', many Basarwa lay specific claim to game meat, as expressed in a conversation about hunting between several men in Khwai:

Rra Diatla: There is no Motswana who can live without meat...

Moses: (*interrupting*) Not any Motswana[56] - you are different, say your ethnicity [*letso*]. I cannot live without game meat because that it what my culture is... That is my life'.

The restrictions on hunting thus present a problem, especially acute when the hunting season is closed (October to March). 'For six months we cannot eat meat, if this continues, we will all be arrested for poaching', Rra Diatla went on to comment.

The legal restrictions that have grown up to regulate hunting have provoked a change in hunting patterns, but not necessarily a significant change in the amount of game meat that is

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[55] In 1998, the hunting regulations were in the process of being revised to considerably raise the fees for these licenses, to P50 for a bird licence, and P50 each for duiker or steenbok.

[56] 'Motswana' usually refers to a citizen of Botswana, but it can also mean a member of one of the politically dominant Setswana-speaking tribes. Rra Diatla was using it in its first sense, Moses was bringing in its second sense.

consumed. Despite legislation, Basarwa continue to hunt regularly. Although legislation has had little impact on levels of hunting, it has had a significant impact on the way hunting is done, how it is internally regulated, and in how Basarwa perceive their legitimacy as citizens of Botswana. I outline the informal - though not illegal - ways in which meat is obtained, before going on to illegal hunting.

Informal procurement of meat

Apart from the regular licensing and quota system, there are three possible avenues in procuring wildlife meat without falling foul of the law:

- Building a relationship with a safari hunter in a neighbouring concession area, who allows them to take some of the meat from commercially hunted animals.
- Chasing predators off their kills, and taking the meat.
- The destruction of 'problem animals' that have damaged or endangered property.

The first is a restricted option, dependent on the goodwill of a neighbouring lessee who leases directly from the Land Board (thus having no obligations with the meat of hunted animals). Khwai was the only village able to make such an agreement, with the lessee of adjacent CHA NG20. Their request was based on a moral claim to NG20 being 'their' land, as historically it was the land that many of their ancestors used, and under the previous division of hunting areas it was subsumed in the area in which they could hunt the animals on their SGLs (Area 7). After some negotiation, the lessee of NG20 agreed to send one of his trucks to Khwai to pick up meat-cutters after several of the five elephants on his annual quota had been shot.

The second is an option that is more widely possible:

> As we went out each day onto the plains to cut grass, I noticed that Moses kept a look out for vultures. If the little black specks riding thermals were visible, he would keep an eye on their movements. They in turn might be following the wanderings of predators on the ground. The vultures were used as indicators of the location of predators, not so much out of fear of their proximity, but for the potential of finding a predator's kill. One day as we were cutting, the vultures were particularly close, and Moses was keeping a keen eye in their direction. All of a sudden, a pack of wild dogs (Lycaon pictus) burst through the bush of a tree island, across the plain, and into the trees of another island. Moses dashed after them, arriving in a small clearing in the island seconds after they had brought down an impala. With the wild dogs having fled our intrusion, we salvaged what we could; three limbs and half a rib cage, leaving the skin and head. Moses explained that this would provide evidence of the kill if we were questioned about our possession of fresh meat. Nevertheless, back at the camp no chances were taken, and after we had eaten, I was told to put the bones into the fire that I had naively thrown over my back.

Chasing predators (wild dogs, leopards, lions and hyenas) off their kills is a practice that has existed for as long as memory stretches in the northern sandveld, as well as elsewhere in Botswana (eg Murray 1976:16 for G/wi and G//ana), and Basarwa often refer to lions as 'our [hunting] dogs'. Although officials I asked differed in their opinions as to whether this contravened the law, wildlife legislation is silent on this issue, indicating it is a means of obtaining meat that is a few shades less illegal than actually killing the animal oneself. Chasing predators off their kills has thus been prompted by legislation to become a comparatively more important means of obtaining meat than it used to be.

The third means by which meat can be informally, but legally, obtained is through the destruction of problem animals; animals that damage crops, kill livestock, or continually endanger people's lives. Although the trophies from such animals belong to DWNP, the meat is generally free to be consumed by whoever wants it.

> In February 1998, Mababe was having problems with elephants stepping over the thorn-brush fences around their fields, and helping themselves to the knee-high sorghum and maize plants – already sparse from the poor rains. This continued for a week, before the village sent a man to Maun to borrow a .375 rifle from their councillor. He returned a few days later, and that evening an elephant was shot. At first light the next morning, its spoor was traced to the place it had keeled over and died, several kilometres from the village. By mid-morning, men, women and children were involved in cutting off chunks of meat, that were then cut into strips and taken back into the village to hang and dry. By the end of the day, all that remained was the head, tusks, bones and skin. Two days later, this activity was repeated with a second elephant. This time it died almost immediately, at the foot of a field next to the village. In the fading light, Kopano, one of the men, cut a slit in its side. '**Tsawaa** [it's fat]', he smiled, and stuffed some leaves into the slit to deter hyenas while they waited overnight to cut it up. Perhaps because of my presence, perhaps just in reminiscence, the older women sang a song next to the dead elephant:
>
> ***Chxoa, Sonda o ko kũ** [Elephants, go back to Sonda[57]]*
> ***Tse kũ Sonda o, tse //ã** [Let's go to Sonda, we are thirsty]*

Elephants are perhaps a stark example of the utility of dead 'problem animals'. While no elephants had been shot by Khwai or Gudigwa, hippo, leopards and lion were, most of which also were eaten. However, it is only really for elephants that the benefits outweigh the costs of the damages they incurred. Table 5.2 gives figures for 'problem animals' killed in the study area.

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[57] 'Sonda' is the name for the area near the head of the Savuti riverbed, where it leaves the Linyanti. Early explorers, such as Seiner (1909), referred to it as 'Sunta'.

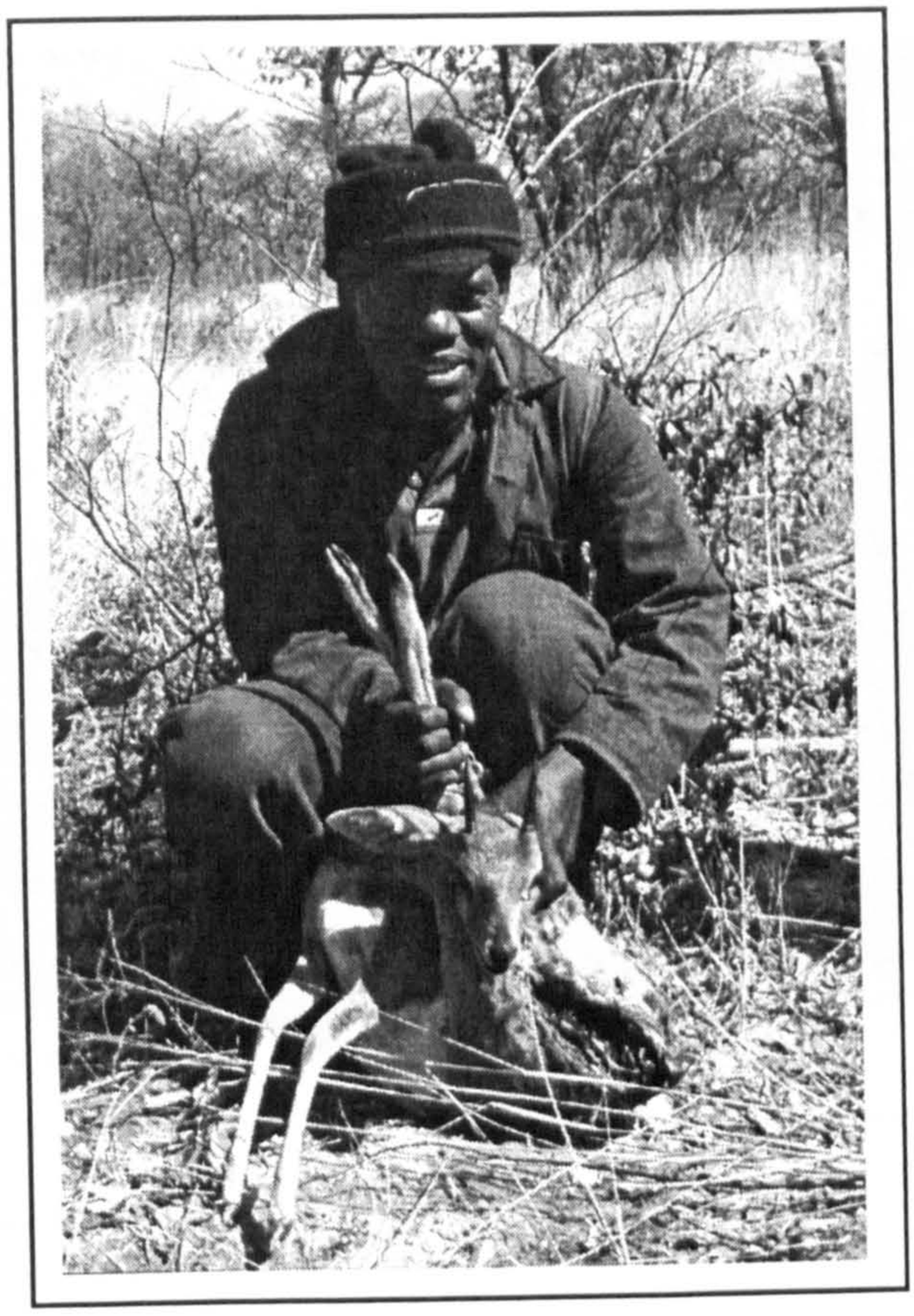

Plate 5.13: Finding a leopard-kill.

Plate 5.14: Sangando with gun.

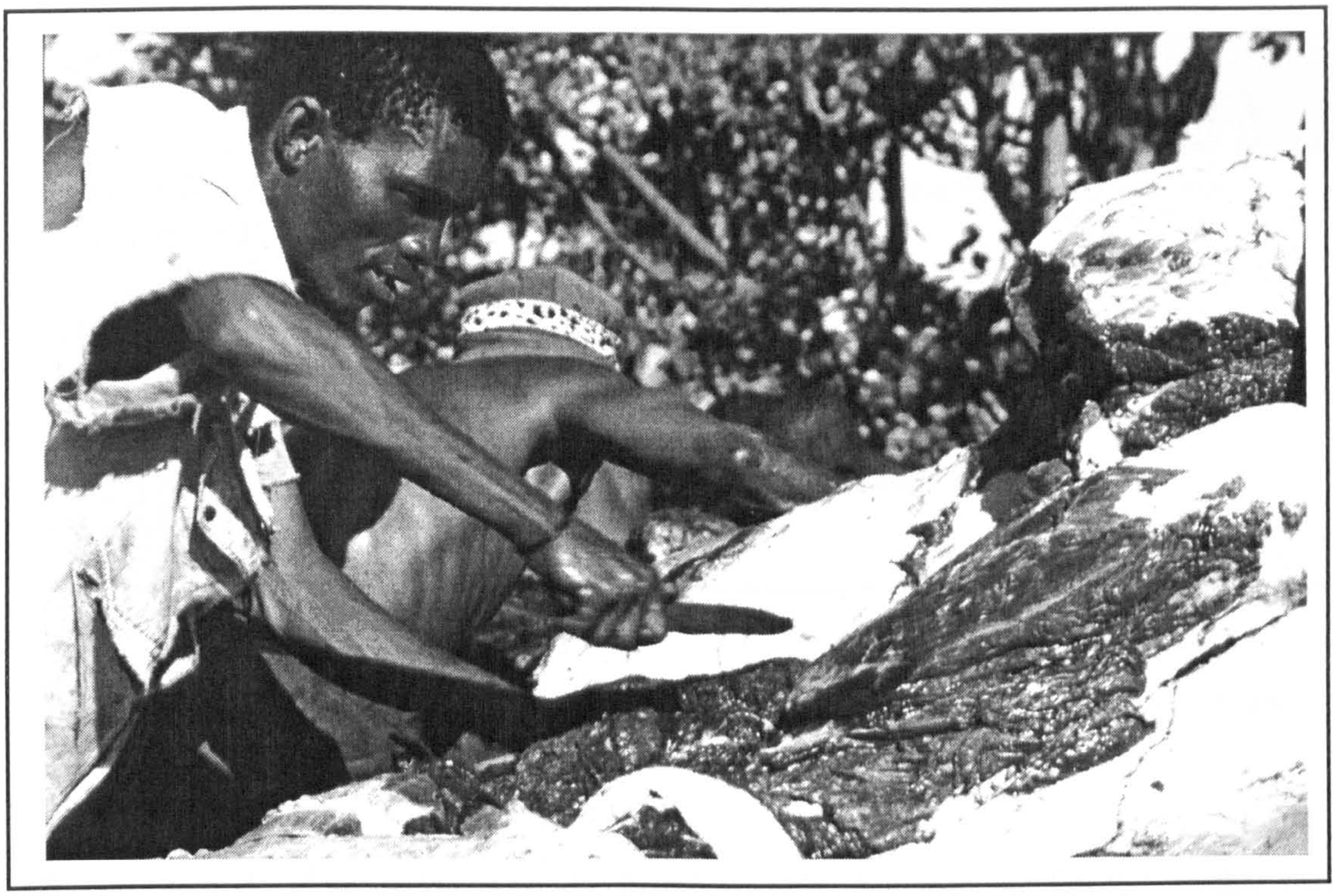

Plate 5.15: Cutting up an elephant, Mababe.

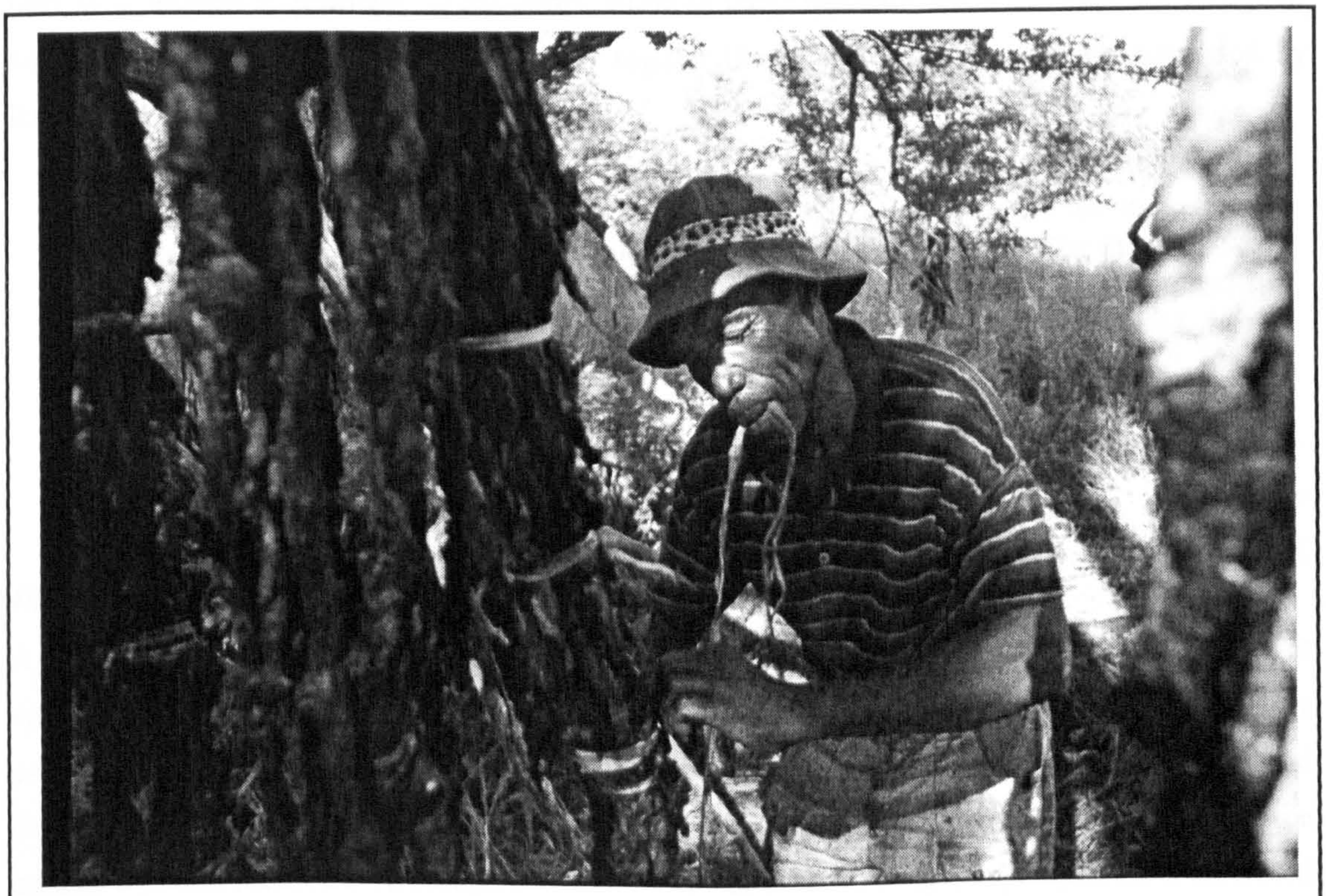

Plate 5.16: Making the elephant strips into strips of meat to dry (*digwapa*).

Plate 5.15: Cutting up an elephant, Mabale.

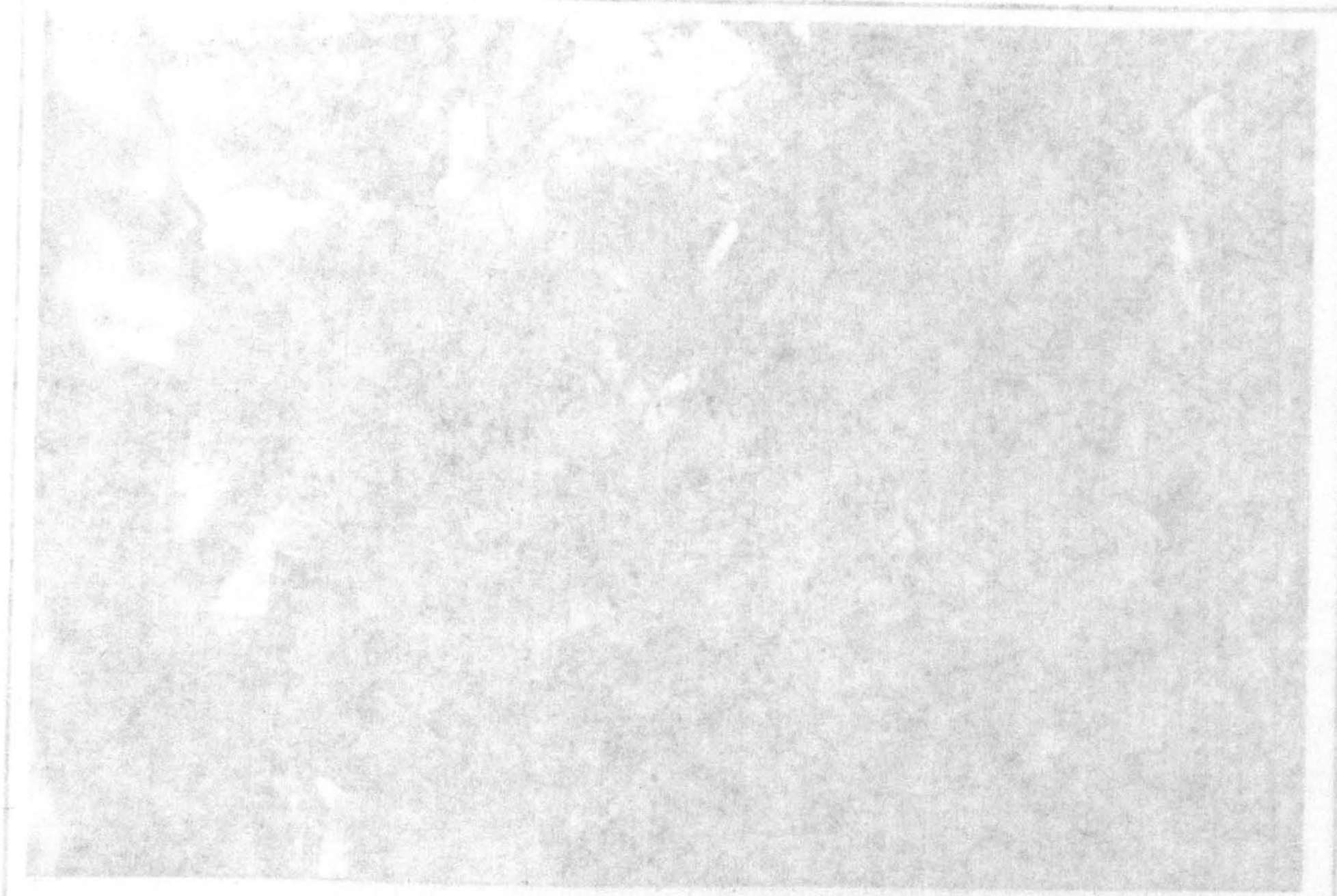

Plate 5.16: Making the elephant strips into strips of meat to dry (dikwapa).

	1995	1996	1997	1998 (Jan-Aug)
Mababe	*(no data)*	*(no data)*	4 elephants* 2 lions	2 elephants
Khwai	*(no data)*	*(no data)*	1 hippo 2 lions	none
Gudigwa	2 lions	1 lion 1 leopard	4 lions	1 lion

Table 5.2: 'Problem animals' killed in Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa 1996-1998 (*only one of these died near the village and could be eaten).

Informal methods of procuring meat do, therefore, exist, but they are limited, in that their timing is generally beyond the control of residents. Finding a predator's kill is good fortune, hunting lodges only provide meat in the hunting season, and only the animals decide when they will become a 'problem' to residents. None of these methods solve the need for a regular supply of game meat. This is a need only regular illegal hunting can meet, as expressed by Rra Diatla in Khwai:

> If they do not listen to us, we will continue stealing animals, because we are oppressed by *molao* [law] that we did not make or understand. We should be given the prerogative to decide how to conserve our animals. We need animals for funerals and *motsetse* [celebrations associated with the mother coming out of seclusion after childbirth]. For these things we need ready access to animals, as we have no livestock or fridges. It is us who must decide on quotas. We are not used to being told when to shoot animals and not. We end up poaching.

Illegal hunting

A wide range of animals are regularly hunted, both small and large. Small animals, such as springhares, tortoises, turtles (for Khwai), pythons, duiker, warthogs, iguanas, civets, etc., are caught by both men and women on short trips out from the village using snares or spears and dogs rather than guns. Larger animals, such as impala, that are old or injured may also be caught by such methods. Although technically illegal, the hunting of springhares is tolerated by many DWNP officials. Hunting them is difficult to disguise, as one has to carry a five metre long ***gondo***; a flexible stick with a wire hook on the end to trap them in their burrows,

and a spade to dig them out once hooked. Hunting of other small animals is generally not tolerated, and those classified as endangered species, such as pythons, carry a maximum P10,000 fine or ten years in prison. The hunting of large animals is more difficult. A gun is required - either one of the few rifles, or a shotgun if the hunter can get close enough. In the past, those that did not have guns, and were fit enough, sometimes ran down their prey with a spear. As with Khwe-speakers more generally, spears were a more common hunting tool than bows and poisoned arrows (e.g. Hitchcock 1995:177-8 for Tyua). Some residents of Gudigwa hunted from horseback, although using horses and donkeys for hunting trips carries the extra risks of making concealment more difficult, especially for hunting animals such as eland, giraffe, kudu and roan which are more abundant east of the northern buffalo fence. Hunting trips for large animals need to go beyond earshot of the village, and generally last a day or more, involving several men. The animal is skinned in the bush, the skin buried to hide evidence, and the meat carried back to the village. If there is a risk of being seen – which is most of the time in Khwai – the meat is hidden on the outskirts of the village, and brought in after dark. If the animal was shot with a borrowed gun or ammunition, the owner is usually given a third to half of the animal.

Meat from hunted animals was used primarily for subsistence. Some of it may be sold within the village for nominal amounts, but only a few individuals made a habit of hunting specifically to sell. Jewe was one such person, a man in his late thirties from Khwai, who spent most of his time in the yard of whoever happened to be selling homebrews that particular day. If he wasn't drinking, he was usually out 'hunting for alcohol'; financing his drinking debts by trips with a spade and his ***gondo*** to catch springhares, which he sold for P10 each back in the village. The occasional hunting of a large animal specifically to sell the meat is also a means of meeting specific financial needs, such as paying for a sick relative to be seen by a healer. Basarwa have thus attempt to use wildlife in this sense to meet their needs in much the same way as pastoralists elsewhere in Botswana use their livestock.

Residents of the northern sandveld have a long history of selling wildlife products. As Maun grew, Khwai and Mababe began to take advantage of the market created by local inhabitants for meat. The Divisional Commissioner commented in 1962 that, 'Both Mababe and [neighbouring] Sankuyu live by hunting buffalo and selling biltong in Maun at ten shillings per bundle' (BNA 1962b). A 'bundle', or *segwapa* [lit: 'dried meat'] consists of about fifteen one metre-long dried strips of meat. Although technically illegal, this practice continued under the SGL system, the price per bundle being P85 in the early 1990s. By 1998, bundles were being sold for P120 each in Maun, the inflated price being due in part to the shortage of

beef after CBPP. Most bundles sold in the late 1990s were from shot problem animals, especially elephants, as illegally hunted meat was generally either consumed or shared or sold within the village. Although rarely was a whole animal sold, Table 5.3 gives an indication of potential returns from selling *digwapa* (bundles of dried meat):

Animal	Number of *digwapa*	Potential yield (Pula)
giraffe	24	2,880
buffalo	13	1,560
eland	10	1,200
gemsbok	10	1,200
kudu	7	720
wildebeest	7	720
lechwe	3	360
impala	2	240

Table 5.3: Yields of bundles of dried meat (*digwapa*) and potential returns (based on the going rate of P120 per bundle in Maun in 1998).

Much more lucrative than selling *digwapa*, however, was the potential income from selling ivory. The recent ivory trade reached a peak in the 1970s and 1980s, but then fell dramatically with worldwide restrictions on ivory trading. During this latter ivory boom, as in the boom of the nineteenth century, Basarwa became involved in guiding hunters, and as hunters themselves. The ivory was generally bought from them at very low prices by Batswana, Hambukushu or Bayei middlemen, who then sold it on to white dealers for export. Prices paid ranged from P20 per tusk to about P3000.[58] Basarwa were at the most vulnerable end of this chain. Often they were paid far less than they were promised, and on one occasion an elderly man from Mababe was beaten and left for dead in the bush after guiding hunters who killed three elephants. Only a few individuals were able to integrate themselves as equals into syndicates – generally comprising a group of several Batswana – who pooled profits to help

[58] Although amounts as high as P65,000 have allegedly been offered to individuals from the study area more recently, by white expatriates in Gaborone.

pay fines, and thus avoid jail sentences. Many elephants shot illegaly were additional to those legally shot under the single citizen licences that were raffled to citizen applicants each year. Illegal killing thus became more difficult once elephants were removed from citizen licences in 1983, a ban that lasted until 1996 when trophy hunting of elephants was resumed. Rhino horn provided an even more lucrative, but very severely restricted, form of income. Only a handful of rhinos were left in the northern sandveld by the 1980s, and, by the 1990s, they were considered extinct.

Falling foul of the law

It is these latter forms of hunting - large animals, especially endangered species such as giraffe, and commercial ivory hunting - that have brought Basarwa to court for poaching. Most of the men older than forty in Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa have been to court at least once for offences related to illegal hunting, and about one third of them have spent time in prison as a result. Actual prison terms have ranged from several weeks to four years. Most of these cases, however, were in the 1970s and 1980s, and were due to hunting within the park, in close proximity to the village, or for attempting to sell ivory to undercover government officials. 'Then we were stupid, and hunted right in front of Game [DWNP]. Now we think to hide ourselves', explained one ex-offender.

Allegations of torture have commonly been made against DWNP and BDF, particularly concerning Basarwa. Cases of torture, in several cases leading to death, have also been documented by the Botswana Council of Churches and Ditshwanelo - the Botswana Centre for Human rights (Mogwe 1992, Ditshwanelo 1996:17). While no Basarwa from the northern sandveld have been killed or maimed, many of the men who have been arrested claim to have been beaten, or to have been submitted to other forms of torture, such as being put in a hole and threatened with being buried alive. Resentment at ill-treatment grew during the 1980s, provoking a number of backlashes against DWNP officials, such as the one described in Chapter Two of a DWNP vehicle and officials in it being attacked in Gudigwa as it arrived with a resident who had been accused of poaching. There were no serious injuries, and DWNP made no reprisals. Perhaps as a result of such expressions of resentment, the 1990s saw fewer allegations of torture, with none between 1995 and 1998.

Studies that have touched upon the treatment of Basarwa by conservation officials have tended to assert that Basarwa tend to receive stiffer penalties for hunting violations than non-Basarwa (e.g. Mogwe 1992, Hitchcock et al. 1996). Although it is probably correct that Basarwa have been more prone to violent treatment (due to their ethnicity and general difficulty of access to legal institutions), a measure of informal *leniency* seems to be granted

to Basarwa in the northern sandveld when it comes to pressing charges. Perhaps this is because many officials from Ngamiland, being ethnically non-Batswana themselves, are more sympathetic to Basarwa. One Anti-Poaching Unit official in Maun explained to me that if he witnessed an offence he could use his prerogative, to either give a warning, or take action. He claimed that he would treat what he saw as subsistence hunting less severely than commercially motivated hunting, a sentiment echoed by Peter, a DWNP official working in Khwai:

> If I found someone from Khwai who had killed something illegally, I would wait and see what motivated them to kill it. I wouldn't report subsistence hunting, but instead give them a verbal warning. As Basarwa here don't plant crops, they need something to eat.

Basarwa seem aware of this informal leniency, often preferring not to hunt illegally with non-Basarwa, which (if caught) would be less likely to be interpreted as subsistence hunting, and thus more likely to lead to sentencing. Anecdotal evidence that Basarwa are less likely to face charges for illegal hunting, is backed up by statistics for Ngamiland's Anti-Poaching Unit. Of the 52 cases of illegal hunting they handled between February 1994 and August 1998, only four evidently (from names or residence) concerned Basarwa.[59]

Despite the long history Basarwa have of hunting for both their own consumption and for trade, many observers make a distinction between 'subsistence', as opposed to 'commercial' hunting, and associate Basarwa with the former. For example, a Director of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks was of the opinion that, 'Until...1966...the use made of wildlife [by the inhabitants of the Okavango Delta] was purely for subsistence and not for commercial purposes' (von Richter and Campbell 1975:4). Such dichotomies carry little resonance with Basarwa. 'Those who had cows made money from them, and we made money from our animals', argued Sangando as we talked about the time he was apprehended by an undercover policeman to whom he offered to sell two tusks for the paltry sum of P30. 'God gave us those things to use', Ogwe said of the elephants he hunted on his off-days from the South African Defence Force in Caprivi. The image of 'proper' Basarwa as purely 'subsistence' hunters is

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[59] Not all cases of poaching are handled by the Anti-Poaching Unit, only those that their own officers apprehend. The four cases concerning Basarwa were:

- 14.03.94 two people from Gudigwa were convicted of illegal possession of firearms. Sentenced to five years in jail, though they were let out early.
- 02.06.95: six people from 'Xaxa' (Cgaecgae) were convicted of poaching four eland. They were fined P500, suspended for two years.
- 09.10.95: two people from Mababe charged with possession of two tusks. Case withdrawn because tusks could not be located, and three years had passed without conviction.
- 1998: Unspecified case involving four Basarwa. Awaiting trial.

evident in the reasons DWNP gave for beginning to phase out the SGL system in 1995. They claimed that SGLs were being 'abused' because some holders had:

- other sources of livelihood.
- sold meat from animals hunted with SGLs.
- used 'non-traditional' means (i.e. guns) for hunting (Hitchcock 1996:3).

Ironically, the new community hunting quota system swings to the other side of the dichotomy, and encourages purely commercial utilisation, thus failing to recognise the mixed nature in the way many residents have used wildlife products.

Impacts of hunting legislation

The one impact progressively more restrictive legislation has *not* had on hunting patterns by the residents of the northern sandveld is to significantly curb hunting, perhaps with the single exception of elephants. It has, however, affected hunting practices in a number of other ways:

- criminalising one of the central markers of Sesarwa identity, symbolically peripheralising Basarwa from 'mainstream' society.
- modifying the strategies used to procure game meat, so as to cope with the effects of legislation.
- reducing the consistency with which meat is legally available; it is often either unavailable, or else there is a glut.
- restricting sharing networks of meat, as meat generally has to be kept hidden within the village.
- encouraging wasteful and abusive hunting practices.
- undermining the ability of Basarwa to effectively manage their own wildlife utilisation, by transforming individual hunting to a hidden activity.

The first of these concerns the way Basarwa are seen, and see themselves, within the wider socio-economy of Botswana. I do not dwell on it here, as it forms the subject of the following chapter on identity. The second has already been covered; a wider variety of informal means of procuring meat are employed, and illegally hunted meat is generally kept hidden. The third is self-explanatory; the means of legally obtaining meat are mostly contained within the officially defined six-month hunting season, and even then may be limited to only a few occasions. This is exacerbated by the cover that the presence of 'legal' meat in the village gives to 'illegal' meat, making these times the easiest for individuals to hunt, and times when there is no legal meat the hardest to hunt.

Plate 5.17: Hunting on behalf of Khwai village from their communal quota.

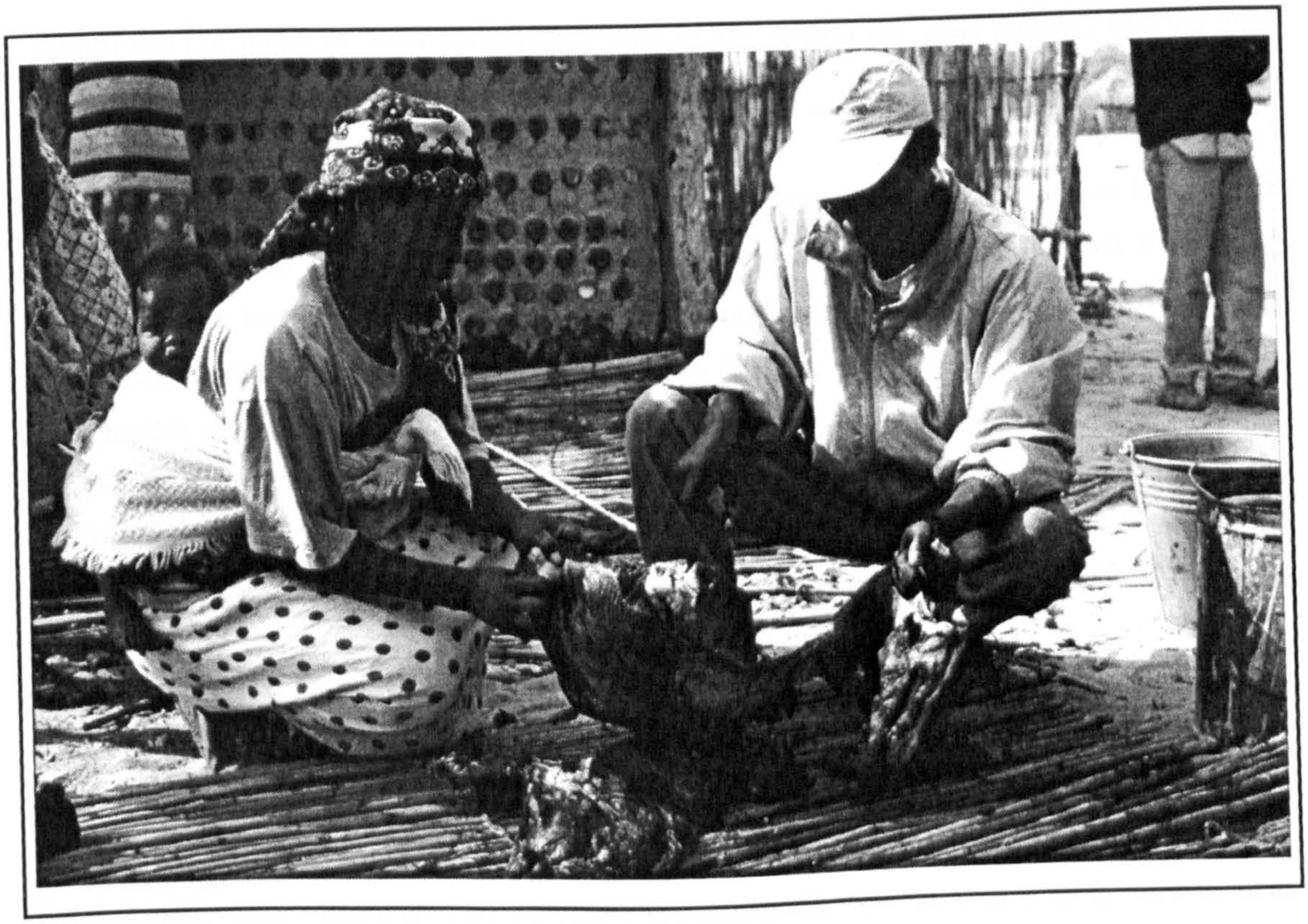

Plate 5.18: Sharing out meat from communal quota, Khwai.

The final three points relate to the 'individualisation' of hunting and use of meat that wildlife legislation has inadvertently encouraged. The present system has made individual hunting difficult but also a necessity. It is difficult because the quota is now given on a communal basis,[60] but individual hunting remains necessary because the communal quota does not provide adequate subsistence for all residents for the whole year (Appendix Four). By making individual hunting illegal, it creates a realm of hunting that needs to be hidden. Even with the legitimacy afforded by Special Game Licences, hunting was generally hidden from officials as much as possible (e.g. Bonduriansky n.d.:7 for Khwai). This was both an effort to retain control of an institution Basarwa felt was their own rather than the government's, as well as to avoid possible accusations of mishunting. Once SGLs were rescinded, the need to keep individual hunting hidden was accentuated; not only from officials, but also from other individuals with whom one may have had a disagreement. Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa all had examples of residents who had acted on a grudge by reporting fellow villagers to DWNP for illegal hunting. The secrecy with which this enshrouded hunting made sharing beyond the household more difficult, [61] especially affecting those unable to hunt (single women, elderly, infirm) who do not have a man capable of hunting in their household.[62] Commenting on this trend, Mma Tiro from Mababe complained that the individualistic attitude she associated with white people had affected Mababe, preventing people from sharing meat: 'It is these [laws on hunting] that corrupted us. Now people here want to live *sekgoa* [as white people], looking after only their own children. But we can't live like that'. [63]

Moreover, making hunting a hidden activity encourages wasteful practices, such as leaving the skins in the bush to avoid incriminating evidence, or leaving some of the meat if it is too much for a lone hunter to carry. It simultaneously acts to undermine the ability of the village as a whole to regulate such hunting practices, as keeping such activities out of the public arena makes it all the harder to exercise accountability in restricting abuse. An incident in Mababe during a lunch break from drought relief work illustrates this principle. Republic, the headman's daughter, saw one of the young men eating meat. It was soon after an elephant had been killed, so Mababe was awash with elephant meat, but Republic did not eat elephant. She

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[60] It is technically possible to divide the communal quota, or a portion of it, among households in the village for individual hunting. However, this is not a practice the Technical Committee has encouraged in the CHAs around the Okavango, although villages with CHAs in parts of the Kalahari less frequented by tourists have been encouraged to take this route.

[61] Hitchcock (1995:184) comments on hunting restrictions causing a similar trend among Tyua in eastern Kalahari.

[62] Nonetheless, some women do hunt, especially households that have no men in them, such as Mma Kanjiye's (Plate 6.2).

[63] The construction of Basarwa as people who (ideally) share and whites and blacks as selfish is widespread (e.g. Widlok 1999:45,46 for Hai//om)

recognised the meat he was eating was something different, and asked for some. 'It's elephant meat,' he replied, trying to avoid sharing it, 'what other meat is there in the village?' An argument then developed, and the other men present rebuked him for leaving most of the animal he had killed in the bush, and for not telling people that he had meat. He defended himself by saying that he had not wanted to risk being reported. Keeme, a VDC member, then told him off for wasting a resource that belonged to all of them by not calling them to help carry more of the meat back to the village. He also berated him and for not taking into account the destitutes in the village who lacked bullets or any means of hunting. Others present threatened to kill him if they found him in the bush doing the same again. The young man fled to Maun, and let the dust settle for a few weeks before he returned to Mababe.

While the bystanders' motivation for berating the hunter in this instance was as much his selfishness in not sharing the meat as his wasteful hunting practice, this incident nevertheless illustrates an attempt at stewardship, as well as the waste and individualism that hunting legislation can encourage. If he had been more careful and not eaten the meat in public, as is more common in Khwai with its heavy DWNP presence, this incident would not have been provoked, denying the opportunity to exert a form of collective control over harmful individual practices.[64] The erosion of collective control over wildlife is ironic with the move to a community quota under CBNRM, which is ostensibly to facilitate *greater* community control of wildlife. Whether CBNRM actually does this remains to be seen, but it is unlikely to affect individual subsistence hunting, which the present legislation delegates to the realm of the illegal.

Conclusion

In considering the three realms in which Basarwa in the northern sandveld pursue livelihoods - cash, livestock and wildlife – it is evident that all three are not only intimately interconnected, but also aspects of each of them are essential to the way they construct their livelihood strategies. Interventions that attempt to replace one type of livelihood with another (such as RADPs attempts to turn its clients from hunters to pastoralists), or to push a singular livelihood agenda (as CBNRM in its initial stages appears to be doing), are thus unlikely to meet with success.

[64] Twyman (1997:180) notes that restrictions on wildlife utilisation had undermined the stewardship patterns of Basarwa in Okwa CHA in the Kalahari to the extent that abuse, such as hunting pregnant female gemsbok in the breeding season, was common. Although such abuses (and they would be acknowledged locally as such) occurred in the northern sandveld, they were not common - indicative of the relative strength of remaining sentiments of stewardship.

It is also evident that Basarwa are disadvantaged in all three of these realms; a function of their 'remoteness', which is both a geographical and socially constructed reality. Geographically, they are distant from educational establishments, and thus find themselves without the formal qualifications that many jobs require. The employment opportunities available in their proximity are also limited. Their remoteness from main population centres means as well that predators are more abundant, which limits livestock accumulation. This geographical isolation is compounded by their social peripheralisation *as Basarwa* from the values that dictate decision-making over factors affecting their livelihood strategies. For example, Basarwa perceive that some employers are reluctant to hire them because of the stigma of their ethnicity. The priority given to wildlife - especially for Khwai and Mababe being situated in Wildlife Management Areas - means that the rearing of livestock either receives little assistance, or is not tolerated. It also means that the use of wildlife, which is important not only for subsistence, but also as a marker of their identity, is severely restricted.

Returning to the Environmental Entitlements framework (Leach et al. 1997), it is evident that, despite living in an environment of abundant goods and services, residents find themselves having to resort to means classed as illegal to translate these into endowments. Access to environmental resources continues, albeit illegally in may cases, but exercising 'legitimate effective command' (i.e. gaining entitlement) over these resources remains largely unattained. Not only is formal control restricted, but also informal means of controlling these resources are undermined by the effects of hunting legislation, which makes activities associated with it into an individual and hidden activity. Although the move to CBNRM offers local residents greater entitlement over natural resources, it has so far done so in such a limited fashion as to force the utilisation of wildlife beyond the legal parameters it sets, making individual and illegal hunting inevitable. The policy on which CBNRM is based also gives little cognisance to the opinion many Basarwa have that wildlife is a resource that they are entitled to because of their specific history, promoting their unwillingness to submit to external controls over its use. Although hunting and gathering may become periphalised as subsistence strategies through legislation and welfare handouts, these practices remain essential as markers of identity. Basarwa, in turn, speak of their identity in terms that contest wildlife legislation, and stress the legitimacy of hunting; the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Six

Identity and legitimacy

Conversations in the northern sandveld about the current situation of Basarwa and their place in the wider social economy of the region often turned to the legendary figure of Khara/'uma, the first person God[65] put on earth, and progenitor of all Basarwa. The story of Khara/'uma is set in the times of ***kx'ei-/am*** ***(kx'ei*** - long ago, ***/am*** - sun or time, in Bugakhwedam, thus 'the times of long ago'), of creation, when the trajectories were set for social relations manifest today, and speaks of the division of the world into hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists. Khara/'uma is believed to have been placed onto the earth at the Tsodilo Hills, a common site for the genesis of the first people in the legends of other Khwe-speakers (e.g. Kilian-Hatz 1999) as well as some Ju/'hoansi and Hambukushu (M. Taylor 1998). The following version of the story was written by Merafe Amos, a young resident of Khwai:

> The old Khwe people believe they were the first people to be put on earth, and they were followed by the Bayei, who they call their cousins. The first Khwe person on earth was Khara/'uma, the hero of all Khwe people. They say that while he was walking around the land with his family, they came to a river, on the banks of which was a *mokoro* [dugout canoe]. They saw lots of animals on the other side of the river, and so wanted to cross. Khara/'uma put his family in the *mokoro*, jumped in himself, and started beating the *mokoro* with a thin stick to make it move, but of course this was impossible. Moyei then came along and said to him, 'My uncle, let me show you how to do this'. He

[65] Bugakhwe in Khwai call God ***Tyani***, and in Gudigwa, ***Khyani***. Ts'exa most commonly use the Setswana word *Modimo,* although some say that in the past he was called ***Nyumkhwe*** (lit. 'creator'). Both Bugakhwe and Ts'exa, however, refer to the first person as Khara/'uma (or sometimes Khara/'umae), as do some Ju/'hoansi (Biesele 1986a:321-3).

fetched a long straight pole, and used it to push the *mokoro* with Khara/'uma and his family to the other side. He left them there, and took the *mokoro* for himself. That is how Bayei and Khwe people started their relationship.

After that, Khara/'uma didn't bother with the *mokoro*, as he knew that his nephew the Moyei had it, and could help him with it when he needed it. Khara/'uma instead chose to concentrate on hunting and gathering wild fruit. On his hunting and gathering trips he came across ploughed fields, and in the fields he found melons, which he ate. But when he found sorghum, he broke the heads off and roasted them whole, trying to eat the seeds one at a time. This annoyed him, because it took himself so long to fill his stomach in this way. Then along came Moyei, who showed him how to grind the sorghum, and make sorghum porridge. He found the porridge delicious, but complained it took too long to make, so he decided to leave the fields as well for his nephew Moyei. He went instead into the bush, knowing that if he needed he could get crops from Moyei whenever he needed them.

Other tellers of the story often add that while Khara/'uma was out hunting, he came across animals that did not run away when stalked. Excited by the ease at which they could be killed, Khara/'uma went and called Moyei to come and share in the feast. Moyei came with him, but when he saw the animals he told him, 'No, my uncle, these are cattle, they should not be hunted'. Moyei then made a kraal and began herding them. Khara/'uma went off to continue hunting, and came across a field of tall grasses that made him itch as he walked through them. Irritated at their itchiness, and wanting to promote the growth of new grass shoots that would attract animals, he set the grasses alight. Moyei came along, saw what he had done, and told him, 'No, my uncle, this was sorghum and should not be burnt'. Moyei then planted sorghum for himself, leaving Khara/'uma to continue eating from other wild plants.

Variations on the story of Khara/'uma are as many as the times it is told, but its appeal lies in its common repertoire that is known and shared by the listeners. It is a hermeneutic framework whose basic elements are shared by many different Sesarwa-language speakers in accounts of the division of the world into hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists (see, for example, Biesele 1986a:321-3 for Ju/'hoansi, Guenther 1989:65-68 for Nharo, and Widlok 1999:46ff for Hai//om). In their most basic sense, narratives of Khara/'uma provide a basis for collective identity. Khara/'uma as a common ancestor of Basarwa provides the fictive kinship links between people subsumed within this category, and the separation of Basarwa as hunter-gatherers from neighbouring agro-pastoralists provides an oppositional identity that maintains categorical boundaries (cf. Maré 1992:11).

While proposing the distinctiveness of a hunter-gatherer identity, such narratives, however, do not in themselves give substance to that distinctiveness, as noted by Widlok (1999:60-1). In

looking at what *does* give substance to Basarwa identity, this chapter takes a different approach to most studies with Basarwa, whose interest has primarily been concerned with what may be termed 'cultural difference'. In an analysis of stories of origin, Widlok (ibid.), for example, finds distinctiveness that separates Hai//om from their pastoralist Ovambo neighbours in a mode of sociality indicated by the style of communicating stories and social experiences. This chapter instead asks *how* and *why* Basarwa represent themselves as different. By placing narratives such as those of Khara/uma within the wider contexts that give them life and meaning, this chapter examines how narratives of identity arise in a context in which Basarwa have come to occupy a structurally peripheral position in the contemporary social and political landscape of Botswana. Assertions of difference are examined not so much for the content of difference that they imply, as their role in claims for concessions and rights to equality.

Although the Kalahari Debate prompted a greater appreciation of the extent which 'hunter-gatherers' have been an integral part of wider social and economic networks, little attention has been paid to how *Basarwa characterise themselves* in contemporary socio-political contexts, and how identities are acted out in social interactions and encounters (cf. Saugestad 1998:136). This chapter explores how Basarwa in the northern sandveld represent themselves, and how these representations are often related to legitimating access to resources from which they have been alienated. Following a discussion of the theoretical issues pertaining to Basarwa identity in Botswana, I examine how Basarwa represent their identity, which is often in terms of their hunting and gathering heritage, and material poverty. The next section examines such expressions of identity as a means of asserting rights against government policies, against dominant values, and against various local 'others'. This leads to the final section, which moves from the neat definitions of 'self' and 'other' to explore the ambiguity that exists in social action and relationships between dominant and subordinate, and the ways in which Basarwa negotiate these dichotomies.

Culture, identity and context

Studies of 'hunter-gatherers' have been dominated by a tendency to catalogue the architecture of social forms that characterise the subjects of their research. Attention has thus been paid to describing such distinctives as egalitarianism, sharing networks, modes of sociality, or physiognomy (e.g. Kent 1992:52). This approach has perhaps been motivated primarily by *our* categorisation of hunter-gatherers as different, a difference that has inspired and maintained the sub-discipline of hunter-gather studies. Focusing instead on how *Basarwa* constitute difference between themselves and others involves acknowledging the ongoing

processes of cultural, political and social self-production, and the changing contexts in which these processes take place. Cultural patterns do not become defunct in such an analysis, but their salience is realised not so much in the forms they take, as in the relations they inform that mark 'us' from 'them'. Identity is thus approached primarily as a *relation* rather than a *thing*: 'a relation inscribed in culture' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992:51).

Acknowledging that 'culture informs, shapes and underpins resistance at least as much as it emerges situational from it' (Ortner 1995:181, cf. Fischer 1999), I argue that culture itself is the level at which oppositional struggles are often made. In other words, certain activities that carry collective meaning, such as hunting, become an important part of a collective identity that is in some respects aimed at sustaining cultural distance from a society that seeks to dominate them by incorporation. My interest in the role of identity in contesting processes of resource allocation and 'development' means that I emphasise its instrumentalist role. This is not to imply, however, that identity is invented to suit political purposes. A sense of identity is developed by acting in the world and interacting with others (Barth 1994:14), and it derives its potency from this repertoire of shared symbols and shared experiences. These common experiences, which include dispossession as well as practices such as hunting, are central in considering Basarwa identity,

Narratives and practices of identity are therefore a means for Basarwa to articulate with the regimes of authority that attempt to shape their lives, an essential component of attempts by Basarwa to assert a form of control over their world (cf. Comaroff 1985:13). In asserting, and practising, difference from a government agenda oriented towards conformity and singularity, Basarwa present a challenge to hegemony and the identity space in which its subjects live. Self-definition is thus decisively a question of empowerment. It is an attempt to address material conditions of deprivation by challenging their roots; the wider webs of meaning that allocate to people different value and unequal position in society (cf. Saugestad 1999:9).

One reason that the Kalahari Debate was able to continue for as long as it did was the diversity of people subsumed under the category 'Bushmen', and the contexts in which they have lived (cf. Barnard 1996:247, Kent 1996). Ethnographic and historical evidence was thus available to back up quite different arguments and justify quite disparate theoretical positions. Alongside this spatial diversity has been rapid temporal change that has left the Kalahari and its inhabitants in very different contexts from when the ethnographers of the 1950s and 1960s began their work. One of the most significant changes has been the political climate of Botswana, that has seen increased opportunities for the assertion of ethnically based claims to

rights, particularly in the 1990s. At the beginning of the decade, an observer had noted that Basarwa had 'no support movements, they are not at all organised beyond the level of band or settlement groups, and they have no connection to international Fourth-World organisations' (Gulbrandsen 1991:84). However, 1992 and 1993 saw high profile national conferences at which Basarwa representatives were for the first time given platforms in the centres of political power. The decade also saw the birth and growth of three pan-Basarwa support organisations: Kuru Development Trust; First People of the Kalahari; and the Working Group for Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (documented by Saugestad 1998:237-83). Furthermore, the 1990s saw the first major cracks in Setswana hegemony in Botswana. Equal representation by non-Setswana speakers in the House of Chiefs, and mother-tongue education (rather than only Setswana and English) became hotly debated – and, by the end of the decade, as yet unresolved - issues in the parliament and national press. Ngamiland, the most ethnically diverse of Botswana's districts, also saw the birth of two organisations, ostensibly to promote the language and interests of two of its 'minorites': *Kamanamakao Society* (by Bayei); and *Mbungu* (by Hambukushu). Locating itself within these wider processes, this chapter examines narratives of identity at the end of the twentieth century by Basarwa in a part of Ngamiland that over the past three decades has increasingly aroused the interest of conservationists, tourists and bureaucrats.

Essentialising identity: how Basarwa speak about themselves

Expressions of identity are rooted in dialectics that not only define 'us' as distinct from 'them', but also make sense of the changing world in which we live. 'Those caught up in a process of radical change come to terms with their history by means of suggestive oppositions', contended Comaroff and Comaroff (1992:159) from their work on Barolong experiences of colonialism in South Africa. In the same way that Barolong spoke of the distinction between wage labour (*bereka*) and work for oneself (*tiro*) as exemplifying the different worlds of exploitation and autonomy, Basarwa often speak in dualisms. These contrast a *Sesarwa* way of life based on wildlife and wild food with *Setswana* (based on pastoralism) and *Sekgoa*[66] (based on cash and the consumption of manufactured goods). As Moses looked back in middle age over his life, he characterised it in such terms:

> I took my wife and had my first child while I was still working at Khwai River Lodge. At this time I was living a life of *Sekgoa* and had left the Sesarwa life. I was different. I worked and had left behind our life of hunting. As I had more children, I started returning to a life of hunting. I bought a gun and used it to hunt... . I had eight children, all of whom I brought up in *Sekgoa* only. I brought them up on money, not fruit... Today everything is done with money.

[66] *Sekgoa* is a Setswana word that is used to refer to the English language or the ways of white people.

The imaginary worlds of *Sesarwa, Setswana* and *Sekgoa* are, like the different livelihood strategies they represent (Chapter Five), not discrete in lived experience, but intimately articulated with each other. Their separation in speech arises from the emotive metaphors that they provide to explain and categorise their world and their experiences in it. *Sesarwa, Setswana* and *Sekgoa* are categories that, as Raymond Williams (1973:291) suggested in his seminal work on the dialectic between 'country' and 'city' in Britain, represent experiences and interests for which there is no immediate vocabulary. Similarly, the moral contrast between experiences in town and village in different African contexts has provided a powerful resource for social critique, and has been well documented (e.g. Mayer 1971, Epstein 1981, Mitchell 1987, Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). Village life has provided powerful alternative 'moral images' (Ferguson 1997:138) to be contrasted against urban realities conceived as artificial, immoral, corrupt and anomic. Comparative oppositions that Basarwa use are similar in that they are a product of experiencing, and means of explaining, the rapidly changing world in which they live. However, these oppositions carry a deeper level of meaning to Basarwa, for whom they describe not only experiences that articulate imaginary worlds, but also a sense of identity as a separate category of people.

The world of Sesarwa is often rooted in either of two oppositions: as a product of the bush rather than agropastoralism or towns; and as a world of poverty rather than wealth. These oppositions provide an immediate and evocative vocabulary with which to define both an identity in opposition to a dominant majority, and as moral narratives against current inequalities.

People of the bush, people of poverty

In one of the only ethnographically-based explorations of contemporary Bushman identity, Suzman (1997) argues from his research with Ju/'hoansi in a very different context - on the Afrikaner and Herero farms of Omaheke in eastern Namibia - that Ju'/hoan identity is constituted, not in terms of cultural institutions left over from a hunting and gathering past, but in terms of their marginalisation and domination by others. They were relegated to stigmatised underclass by the emergent political economy, and, Suzman argues, came to constitute their own identity in terms of their dependent underclass status. Like Suzman, this chapter argues that in studying former hunters and gatherers, it is necessary to move beyond the theoretical frameworks and models generated for the study of them as 'hunters and gatherers'. However, as stories of Khara/'uma imply, Basarwa from the northern sandveld, unlike Ju/'hoansi in Omaheke, draw not only upon their underclass status, but also their

gatherers'. However, as stories of Khara/'uma imply, Basarwa from the northern sandveld, unlike Ju/'hoansi in Omaheke, draw not only upon their underclass status, but also their hunting and gathering past. Perhaps because Basarwa in the northern sandveld have not been subject to such brutal and sustained subjugation, and because the limits to hunting and gathering are not environmentally, but politically, constituted, their history of hunting and gathering remains an important element in contemporary narratives of identity.

Narratives of Khara/'uma are a clear example of the primordialist and essentialist imagery that 'first peoples' worldwide often use in representing themselves to the outside world (cf. Sharp 1996, Fischer 1999). These stories represent a world in which Basarwa are a people whose way of life has been set from the beginning of time to be one derived from the bush, in contradistinction to their Bantu-speaking neighbours, who became agro-pastoralists. Within this scheme, one of the key markers of what it means to be Mosarwa is the use of wildlife. 'There is no life now because there is no meat', exclaimed Petros, an old blind man from Khwai, or in the words of Mmadifalana, an old woman in Khwai: 'I want to live by meat, because that is the seed [*peo*] of culture [*ngwao*] that our parents left us'. Eating game meat is thus represented as more than a subsistence option - although the hunger caused by not having easy access to wildlife is at times very real - but an essential element of their identity as Basarwa. Phentse, a middle-aged man from Mababe, explained this to me in terms that he thought I would best understand: 'I could not survive without game meat, because it is something like vitamins for me'. An identity tied to wildlife is not only expressed verbally. Some men display visible markers of this identity, especially horns from large antelope such as eland and kudu, in their homes or tied to the fences around their yards. It is, of course, also a lived identity; one that is practised in the form of regular hunting and gathering.

In the same way that most Basarwa have experience of hunting and gathering, and the contemporary restrictions on doing so, they also have experience of poverty. In a conference in Gaborone in October 1993, Aaron Johannes, a founder member of First People of the Kalahari, took the stage and announced of those that have come to fall under the name *Basarwa*:

> We have many different names, and come from many different places with many different languages. But one thing is common to us all: we are the people with no money.

This was more than a statement of circumstance, or an observation that many Basarwa happen to be poor. Poverty is often a defining feature of how Basarwa represent their identity as a

category of people, and is reflected in the names Basarwa call themselves. The term *Xukhwe*, for example, is an all-encompassing term used by Bugakhwe and Ts'exa to refer not only to themselves but also all other people that would otherwise be known as Basarwa. A commonly used self-referential term, Xukhwe appears to be one of some antiquity, noted, for example, by Seiner (1977 [1910]) on a trip through Ngamiland in 1905/6. I asked both Bugakhwe and Ts'exa what 'Xukhwe' meant, and each time I was given a similar answer: '*xu* means to leave or forsake, and *khwe* means person, so *Xukhwe* means the forsaken people. We are the people that are thrown away'.[67]

The current explanation of the name *Xukhwe* is one example of the way in which Basarwa frequently represent themselves as a people marked by poverty, or as 'People of the short blanket' (English et al. 1980). A similar explanation is often given by Basarwa on the meaning of the word 'Mosarwa', as in the following exchange on a visit to Ju/'hoansi in Namibia by delegates from the northern sandveld in July 1998. As they shared ideas in a meeting, the issue of naming arose:

Ju/'hoansi: You call yourselves 'Mosarwa'. Where does that name come from?
Visitors: Mosarwa means *mo sa rua*; someone that does not own stock. That is our name because we are poor.
Ju/'hoansi: What, then, is the opposite of 'Mosarwa'?
Visitors: The opposite of 'Mosarwa' is *morui*, a person that has livestock, a person that is rich.

For many Basarwa, one of the most salient markers of their identity is their common experience of dispossession, mistreatment, or neglect by those more economically or politically powerful than themselves. Characterising themselves as a people marked by poverty is thus not so much an intrinsically negative self-image, but a commentary against a pattern of domination that is seen as responsible for their poverty. The twin images Basarwa present of being people of the bush and people of poverty are mutually interdependent. Being materially poor means much of their livelihood is gained from the bush, and being people of

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[67] This contemporary explanation probably does not, however, reflect the origin of the name *Xukhwe*. Köhler (1989:183) was told several decades earlier by Kxoe in the Caprivi Strip (who also call themselves *Xukhwe*) that this was the name given to them by //Anikhwe in the distant past. His informants maintained that //Anikhwe and Bugakhwe were the same people, until the //Anikhwe went to live along the Okavango River, leaving Bugakhwe in the bush, thus naming them *Xukhwe*: 'the people who are left behind'. Nonetheless, the current explanation in the northern sandveld reflects the ways in which narratives of identity are moulded by contemporary circumstances. Its current use to refer to all Basarwa (adopted by Ts'exa as well) also reflects the widening of a pan-Basarwa identity in Botswana.

> For those of us who have no cattle or jobs, wildlife is our life. But the government['s legislation] is making some people poor and some people rich. I am destitute. I am Mosarwa.

Narratives of identity and the constitution of rights

To take Basarwa representations of themselves as hunter-gatherers as evidence that they constitute an ethnic group of hunter-gatherers, would miss the point of such narratives. An equal misinterpretation would be to argue, on the basis of narratives of poverty, that the category of people labelled Basarwa is simply an underclass created by capitalist penetration into the Kalahari. The realities of their lives speak against such simplicities. Such assertions are primarily statements of *ideology*, directed at those who would rule and change them (cf. Keesing 1992:226). These discourses are part of their struggle, which is, in Scott's (1985:xvii) words:

> Not only one of material objects, but appropriation of symbols, of how past and present should be understood and labelled, to identify causes and lay blame... a contentious effort to give partisan meaning to local history.

Statements of identity are thus used to constitute a local 'moral economy' (Thompson 1975), grounded in local views of norms and obligations, which legitimate for everyday practice what has become illegal and illegitimate. That a subordinate class of people should develop moral economies to sustain and legitimate practices defined as illegal is not a new discovery. Peasants in eighteenth century England (Thompson 1975, Hopkins 1985) and contemporary Malaysia (Scott 1985, 1990), hill people in northeast India (Karlsson 1997), and residents on the peripheries of Zambian National Parks (Balakrishnan and Ndlouvu 1992) have all created alternative moral economies. Such moral economies have been based on customary rights to land and its products, and have served to sustain and legitimate access to resources that have been legally closed to common access. In this sense, Basarwa share both a dilemma and a means of legitimating common practices with many others in a similar situation, including non-Basarwa around the Okavango Delta. However, the moral economy that Basarwa vocalise is more than an appeal to customary rights of tenure, but a very identity that is based largely on the use of these resources.

Narratives of Khara/'uma are widely known, not only among Basarwa, but also by many of their Bayei and Hambukushu neighbours. As such, they provide a wide currency with which to establish a moral universe of relationships between themselves, their neighbours, and the environment in which they live. This is a universe in which:

- Basarwa were first in the land.
- God gave Basarwa all natural resources.
- Basarwa chose to live off wild food, leaving black people to domesticate cattle and crops.
- The relationship between Basarwa and their non-Basarwa neighbours was supposed to be one of mutual co-operation and assistance.

The strength of narratives of Khara/'uma lies in their malleability. They are a common codification that can be manipulated to provide a moral commentary on current ethnically-structured inequalities. For example, Manne Thamaga, the younger brother of Gudigwa's headman, referred to Khara/'uma in questioning their domination by Hambukushu and Bayei, with whom they were united under Okavango Community Trust:

> Blacks came and took our cows because they saw they were useful and valuable, and they left us with the wild animals because they saw they were dangerous. After killing cattle with ease, Khara/'uma tried to kill buffalo, but found they were very vicious and they nearly killed him, so had to flee up a tree. Mokoba [Moyei] took the cattle, leaving the dangerous ones for us. We lived happily with the wild animals, taking what we needed. Then today they see that animals can make money, so they have decided to take those as well. They want to make a business with those dangerous ones as well, but those are ours. Why do they want a share now, when in the beginning they did not look after (*rua*) them with us, saying they are too dangerous?

Although their circumstances in OCT prompted Manne in this instance to assert a local moral economy against their non-Basarwa neighbours, such narratives are usually directed against the laws and values of *molao*, embodied by the government. Moral economies not only legitimate illegal activities such as hunting, but also criminalise the state for denying Basarwa what should be rightfully theirs:

> When I poach [*utswa*, lit. 'steal'], my heart does not tell me I have stolen. What may hold me back is the fear of being arrested, beaten and jailed. Who then will feed my family? I can't say some Basarwa poach and others don't. All of us will take an animal if we get the opportunity because they have been ours since the beginning. It is the same for us as you going to the fridge and getting out a loaf of bread. (*Moses, Khwai*)

> When we steal animals, it is not that we despise the government, but we are hungry. It is the government that is at fault if we steal, not us, because they have taken our *phapadi* [wild foods]. If I could see, I would be hunting. I have waited for the government for a long time, thinking this person called government will change. What will we live by? Those that see should go and steal. It is not us at fault, but government. They should pay the fines if there are any. What kind of law is it that can refuse us mice - mice! - which is what springhares are? (*Petros, Khwai*)

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If I go into my kraal and take a goat out and kill it, who can tell me I have done wrong? The government says we are *disenyi* [law-breakers], but it is government that brought in the safaris that shoot all over the place. When I [i.e. Basarwa] was in charge, there were many animals, so the government is *sesinyi*. (*Joubere, Mababe*)

Equating hunting for Basarwa with getting a loaf of bread out of the fridge for white people, or with a Motswana taking a goat from his herd are commonly used metaphors by Basarwa. Idea, the budding hawker from Mababe, for example, told me that, 'Wildlife is my bread. In Maun they eat loaves, I eat wildlife. God divided us that way.' On another occasion, I asked July Kangondo, a middle-aged resident of Khwai, whether he had ever owned livestock, he shook his head, then laughed and said, 'Of course I have owned livestock; buffalo, pythons, impala, lechwe....', and proceeded to reel of a list of wild animals. The use of such metaphors has been a pattern of speech for a long time, as indicated by Stow (1905:282) who was told at the end of the nineteenth century by a lone surviving Bushman in the Orange River valley that, 'all the game was our cattle'. As Raymond Williams (1973:291) suggests, bread and wildlife, cattle and buffalo, all provide immediate metaphors for deeper experiences, and passionately felt beliefs about what should be legitimate. Using the metaphors of dominant pastoralist economy serves to translate the rights accepted for pastoralists to 'hunter-gatherers'. By inverting the opposition between pastoralists and hunter-gatherers - categories that dominant society is in part responsible for creating - they reveal and challenge the premises of the form of Setswana hegemony that seeks to control Basarwa by incorporation.

Articulating with molao

The struggle to assert a local moral economy against *molao* [law] is especially difficult, as it challenges not only an overt legal system, but also the associated, and unwritten, package of values that underlie what it means to be a proper person. As outlined in Chapter Four, Basarwa have been represented as people without *molao* – wild and unpredictable, as they supposedly lack the social institutions that grant them proper humanity. Basarwa response to this has generally been a mix of conforming to *molao* in some respects, and in others attempting to counter it with a conception of their own Sesarwa *molao*.

The authority of *molao* pervades and regulates all aspects of life. What Basarwa discussed, the appropriateness of different contexts for discussing different issues, and the way these were framed, were all bound by *molao*'s invisible system of values and mores. For example, early one morning the man whose family I was staying with in Mababe went out hunting. He returned a few hours later, complaining that his hunt had been unsuccessful. Yet later in the morning he went to the outskirts of the village and returned carrying a sack. As we sat together at lunchtime eating fresh meat, however, any comment from me about enjoying the fruits of the morning's hunt would have been inappropriate. Verbalising what we all knew would have been tantamount to explicitly placing my host in the category of 'thief'. Not talking about it allowed him, instead, to retain an air of respectability. Conversations about illegal hunting were thus often framed in ways that *molao* deemed acceptable, although their unspoken subtext communicated a very different message.

While the pervasiveness of *molao* demands that everyday speech conforms to its dictates, Basarwa are also vocal in decrying its consequences. '*Molao* is killing us', I was told several times, in reference to both the physical hunger caused by legal restrictions on hunting, as well as the challenge *molao* makes to a construction of Sesarwa culture in which wildlife is a key marker:

> We lived off the veld, our parents getting food from plants, and killing animals with spears and arrows. We learnt to use these, but they serve no purpose because we are not allowed to hunt. *Molao* [law] has killed us Basarwa. (*Mathias, Khwai*)

Moses was especially vocal about *molao* – not only the consequences of its manifestation in the law, but also its power of incorporation, as some of the younger generation appeared to adopt its values:

> It is *molao* that is killing *Bosarwa* ['Bushmanness'], that is where it is heading. Once government says something, it is a decision, and you cannot change it. We are powerless in the face of government. If something is done by a vote and you are a minority, what can you do? The young people outnumber us, and they don't want animals to be put aside for *tlholego* [heritage]. Our lives will be changed and we will be living in towns wearing suits. They want *sekgoa* [ways of white people] to come in. They want to be part *Lekgoa* [white person], part Motswana, but nothing Basarwa. Like in America, there are Basarwa [first people] who have lost their culture. In the end, Basarwa will be doing what you are doing: going to other countries and asking about their culture [because they will no longer have any of their own].
>
> Government says that people must keep their culture, but they are not saying that to Basarwa. Motswana has livestock, shops, and farms. Whites have factories. Mosarwa has wildlife, but the government says these are not ours, and belong to all Batswana. That makes me give up on my *Bosarwa*. The government should give us our areas to

govern, and they can make sure we do it well - and we will, because that is what we have always done. They have finished the wildlife in their land, leaving only names to show there was once wildlife there, because they wanted cattle. We are supposed to *rua* [look after/own] the animals, but they are not ours. All those other people want to get rich from wildlife as well, and as they have finished theirs, they want ours now. They are already rich, but still want our wildlife.

If we go and sell our wildlife to whites, we have killed our own culture, but if we are a minority, what can we do? *Bosarwa* will die. Whites and Batswana will keep getting money from our wildlife, but we are losing our culture, because they want these animals. We will also lose our culture because some of us despise it, and want nothing to do with the bush.

> We want to govern this area ourselves. It means nothing to a Motawana if these animals die, they still live on their cattle. They put fences to preserve their animals. They eat in our area, but we do not eat in theirs.

Moses asserts Basarwa culture as one primarily based on wildlife, the sense of dispossession from which has heightened its salience as a marker of Sesarwa 'tradition'. As *molao* defines such use of wildlife as illegal, by implication Basarwa culture becomes illegal and illegitimate. Moses' response is an impassioned defence of what he defines as Basarwa culture. The passion behind his words, and those of many others that weave through this chapter, speak against the instrumentalism of observers such as Wilmsen, who present such primordialist claims as, '*nothing more* than claims to ownership of the past and rights to use it for present purposes' (1996:3, emphasis mine). This passion indicates an affective attachment to these markers, and an affinity that goes beyond mere instrumentalism.

A parallel response to Moses' defense of Sesarwa 'culture' is to invoke a Sesarwa *molao* as a counter to official *molao*. Moitshoki, a younger man from Khwai, spoke of the government's *molao* as restrictive, but their own as giving them the freedom to hunt:

> The difference between our *molao* and the government's is that our *molao* allowed us to chase animals and kill them, that is how we used to do it. We also dug traps and used snares, bows and *gondo* [long hook for catching springhares]. We didn't use guns. We used medicine made from urine, mixed with herbs, to give endurance and success in hunting. The way we killed did not cause the animals to flee. Today they run away because of guns. Guns are not bad in themselves, and they were given to us by the government[68]... The government has taken our land, we are left with nothing with which to support ourselves. The mistake was not bringing guns, but taking away our food.

[68] In the 1970s, the government confiscated muzzle-loaders and Martini-Henry's from their owners, many of which were over one hundred years old, and were considered dangerous. It compensated owners with shotguns or rifles.

Although set in opposition to a dominant *molao*, Moitshoki's conception of a Sesarwa *molao* is not one that precludes options such as hunting with guns. As such, he also challenges the dichotomy that, as 'people of the bush', they do not have the rights to goods and services that other people have, and furthermore, that access to such goods necessarily undermines their stewardship of the environment.

Many Basarwa see the Community Based Natural Resource Management Programme as providing an opportunity to turn the tables and assert *molao* themselves over tourism operators in their area. Forming a legally registered Community Trust requires a constitution, referred to in Setswana as *molao motheo* (*molao* - law, *motheo* – plan). For the first time, they had an opportunity to assert a *molao* of their own in *written* form, thus reflecting the power of the written *molao* (constitution) of Botswana. With the promise of assistance from an external advisor (funded by an NGO), Khwai rejected the standard pro forma constitution provided by the Technical Committee, and took the opportunity to make their own *molao motheo*. In an early workshop to discuss their constitution, in March 1996, they decided to declare in it that Khwai is a Basarwa area, and non-Basarwa will not be allowed to partake in the benefits of their Community Trust unless by marriage. This clause was nonetheless rejected by the Technical Committee as discriminatory when their constitution was submitted in 1998, and led to a deadlock, with Khwai unable to register their Trust.

Narratives of identity, and the moral economies they support, are therefore primarily aimed at asserting rights against the people and government that have come to dominate them, and particularly the limitations imposed by official laws and policies. They are also used, however, against other people in the locality, whether non-Basarwa or Basarwa, whose origins lie elsewhere, by renegotiating the principles of belonging.

Renegotiating belonging

Focusing on narratives of identity anchored in a simple dichotomy of a subjugated 'us' in opposition to a dominant 'them' can hide the complexity and creativity of relationships between subaltern and their many 'others' (cf. Brown 1996:733). In concert with a widening pan-Basarwa sense of identity, has been an opposite process; the assertion of local identities against local 'others'. This is most evident in the way that associations to particular tracts of land are negotiated, and most probably associated with restricted access to, and the heightened value of, natural resources.

Despite often being known by names that are topographical, association by Basarwa with particular places has historically been fairly fluid, due to flexible band structures and a

relatively dispersed population. Belonging in a specific area has been figured more by kinship than previous residence patterns. Basarwa today maintain that in the past, moving to live with another group of people in their territory was a frequent occurrence, dependent primarily on the ability to establish kinship links with the 'owners' of the land. However, as progressively stricter regimes of land tenure have decreased access to land, so have some residents recently begun identifying more strongly with *specific* tracts of land. This is particularly pronounced for the residents of Khwai, who have had least security of tenure, and who also have experienced a high degree of immigration (mostly by relatives from Gudigwa). I realised this after a conversation I had with Mma /Idam, soon after moving to Khwai. Mma /Idam is Moyei, and she and her household are the only long-term non-Basarwa residents in Khwai. Mma /Idam claims she first moved to Khwai from Sankuyu (a predominantly Bayei village) in 1971, and is ironically the only adult in Khwai whose teknonym arises from a child with a Bugakhwedam (and Ts'exadam) name. /Idam, her first daughter, was born from an illicit relationship with a childhood sweetheart at Mababe. As a marginal resident in Khwai, Mma /Idam was always keen to talk to me, and it did not take me long to ask her how she ended up in Khwai. She obliged:

> I used to live at Sankuyu, but life was hard, so I decided to return to the area from which we originated, Khwai. When Basarwa came here, they found us here already, although many had moved to Sankuyu. Many of the people here are recent arrivals. This is the land of Borazi, my mother's father. They left here, because of tsetse fly, to places like Sankuyu. Kanjiye [the lagoon next to Khwai village] belonged to Yarbi father of Mothathise [who was Mma/idams classificatory uncle], father of Santombwa [all Bayei]. When I was a little girl, my parents came here with others to fish and hunt. They gave some of what they caught to Santombwa because this was his lagoon. You can still see the remains of the animal traps they dug south of Kanjiye.
>
> Kwere came from here to Sankuyu. Mma Lebonang [one of the women in Khwai most vocal about Mma/Idam not belonging]'s mother carried me on her back when I was a baby. Kwere moved to Sankuyu from /Uku [Hippo Pool] with his in-laws Sango and Amos. People from Sankuyu came here every year after planting. Kwere found Basubia at /Uku, where they had some fields. Then the Basubia left, and Kwere was lonely, so he went to Sankuyu. Lebonang [Mma Lebonang's daughter]'s father's mother was a Subiya, and still lives at Sankuyu. Her father was a Moyei, the son of Mma Lebonang's father's sister. Kwere [and his people] only stayed a few years at Sankuyu, then got thirsty and returned to /Uku.

Once she had told me her story, I left Mma /Idam's yard, and was soon called over by Mma Lebonang and Mma Kelereng, key members of Khwai Interim Management Committee. They were incensed that I had spent so long speaking to a *moagedi* – someone who lived here only because they had built a house, not because she belonged. They found it especially

disconcerting that I had thus written the 'wrong' history. Mma Lebonang attempted to put the record straight:

> Mma /Idam is here because she is a *moagedi*. She was born in Sankuyu, and Mmobi (the headman of Sankuyu) is her mothers younger brother. Her *Omang* [National Registration card] says she was born at Sankuyu. We have a home in Maun, but that doesn't mean we are from there - we are from here. Everything she does here is for business. She came here for business to cut grass, sell beer and have a *semausu* [hawkers shop], but her *semausu* has stopped operating. She has no plot of her own here in Khwai; hers is at Sankuyu. She has no place here. Mma/idam built her houses on her own accord, we didn't give her permission... Those that say we lived with Bayei should specify it was at Gabamukuni, not here at Khwai. We have been sleeping, but now we have woken up, and will do business ourselves. Basarwa are in charge of this land, and there is no black person who is going to push us around.

These two narratives exemplify the changing manner in which attempts to legitimate title to land are framed. Mma /Idam framed her arguments for belonging in Khwai according to kinship, by stressing her historical closeness with the main families at Khwai, and their kin relationships with Bayei from Sankuyu. She also points to her ancestor's periodic use of land at Khwai as justification for her present residence. Mma Lebonang, on the contrary, distanced Basarwa at Khwai from other non-Basarwa with whom they have periodically lived, by downplaying kinship links, and emphasising relations to land. This distancing is directed not only against non-Basarwa like Mma /Idam, but also against other Basarwa.

People in Khwai have extensive kinship links with residents of Mababe and Gudigwa, both through descent and marriage. However, Khwai is the only village of the three situated next to a permanent river. While the residents of Mababe and Gudigwa categorise themselves as *Basarwa ba motlhaba* ('Basarwa of the sandveld'), Basarwa in Khwai call themselves *Basarwa ba noka* ('Basarwa of the river'), a label usually reserved for //Anikhwe. On my first visit to Khwai, Dice, Chairman of the Village Development Committee, explained to me:

> There are many groups of Basarwa, like there are many groups of white people. We at Khwai and //Anikhwe are the only river Basarwa, all the others are *ba motlhaba*. They have their wells and pans to drink from. We get our food from the river.

I soon found out about the efforts by various government officials to move Khwai away from their location next to the Khwai River, to a site at Mababe, next to a dry riverbed that had last flowed in 1979. The precariousness of their tenure in Khwai had thus encouraged its residents to express a sense of identity linked to the geographical area of Khwai. This was asserted to the extent that none of the families from Khwai sent their children to a new primary school that opened in Mababe in 1998 (Plate 4.5), which was intended to serve both villages. Mma

Lebonang, one of the most vocal members of Khwai against the move, described their differences thus:

> We don't get on with the people from Mababe; they are not the same as us. They are Basarwa of the sandveld, and we are of the river. The only River Basarwa are Bugakhwe and //Anikhwe. Those at Gudigwa are not River Basarwa because they are away from the river. We don't know how to live in the sandveld, because our lives are in the river.

Moses went even further, including the location of Khwai as an integral part of who they are: 'The Minister wants us to move, but if we move we will have left our culture here at Khwai, as we are people of Khwai, Bugakhwe'.

Bugakhwe from Gudigwa who have moved to Khwai to take advantage of local job opportunities also find themselves excluded as *Basarwa ba motlhaba*, even though they can claim kinship links with people in Khwai. In private arguments, they are referred to as *matsenelela*; cattle that join the wrong herd when they are kraaled. Identity and a sense of belonging in Khwai are thus becoming more fixed to land and less fixed to people, a reversal of previous means of figuring belonging. This growing sense of identity at the local level cross-cuts familial relationships, allowing distancing from in-laws in Mababe and Sankuyu as well as from their own relatives at Gudigwa.

The complex faces of hegemony

Representations by Basarwa of their identity as different from others around them are linked to attempts to assert autonomy and a sense of control over themselves and their environment. However, these representations are just that; representations of clear-cut dichotomies that represent a world that is in reality a lot more ambiguous than they suggest. Ambiguity arises not just from the diversity of everyday practice, but as a product of the interplay between dominant and subordinate. It is in this relationship of differential power that attempts are made by the dominant to characterise, define and make subjects of the subordinate, and expressions of identity are in part a means of resisting these efforts, and asserting autonomy from them. In this symbolic struggle – in which material resources are nonetheless at stake – the meanings associated with ethnicity and identity change as they are asserted, adopted, challenged or rescripted. Resistance is 'an experience that constructs and reconstructs the identity of subjects' (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:19), and as such it changes people, defining the way they are subject to others, and how they come to be tied to their own identities (cf. Ortner 1995:187). At the same time, self-definition by Basarwa untidies and distorts the larger identity space in which they live, and which those in power attempt to fashion.

In order to understand these processes further, I return to the concept of hegemony, introduced in Chapter Four. Although Gramsci proposed the concept to understand how forms of power encourage consent, it is equally useful in understanding struggle. Roseberry (1996:80) argues that the concept of the naturalising power of hegemony is helpful in illuminating:

> the ways in which the words, images, symbols, forms, organisations, institutions, and movements used by subordinate populations to talk about, understand, confront, accommodate themselves to, or resist domination are shaped by the process of domination itself. What hegemony constructs, then, is not a shared ideology but a common material and meaningful framework for living through, talking about, and acting on social orders characterised by domination.

Hegemonic forms of control attempt to render identity problematic by turning unconscious, unreflexive acts into problematic, conscious and conspicuous ones (cf. Morris 1989:150-6). Hunting and gathering therefore become not just neutral means of procuring subsistence needs, but activities loaded with symbolism. Patterns of living that are attached to a notion of 'Sesarwa culture' - precisely because they are different from those of dominant society - become sites of contestation between those that practice them and the state. While the hegemony of the state attempts to control and even eradicate them, they become key cultural markers for Basarwa, and symbols with which to *challenge* Setswana hegemony.

In speaking of their own identity, therefore, subaltern people often do not escape hegemonic frames of reference. In other words, they use the definitions of them that are propounded by the dominant. The label *Mosarwa* (or *Masarwa*)[69] itself is an immediate example of this. Despite being a Setswana term, it is now commonly used as a term of self-designation by Basarwa in Botswana, in places to the exclusion of previous terms of self-appelation. Describing themselves as 'people of the bush', or 'people of poverty' also mirrors dominant representations of Basarwa in the same terms (Chapter Four). However, these markers and symbols are reworked in new ways (cf. Comaroff 1985): being people of the bush is a *positive*, rather than a derogatory assertion; and being characterised by poverty is turned into an accusation at the policies and laws that make them poor.

Responses to Setswana hegemony are a complex mix of what could be classified as resistance, accommodation and complicity. Much of what Sesarwa culture symbolises is

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[69] The prefix *ma-* is used in Setswana of foreigners (such as *Makgoa* - white people), and as the prefix for class six nouns. Although 'Masarwa' is still often used in general discourse (by both Basarwa and non-Basarwa), official policy is to use the more politically correct 'Basarwa'.

ostensibly to dig *tswii* (water lily roots): 'I am a Mosarwa and this land is mine, I will take what I want from it'. On another occasion, Jewe, Khwai's champion springhare hunter, shouted as he walked out of the village with his hunting gear, '*O a tlola*' ('You have no right to tell me that'), to the game guard who told him, 'You are not allowed to hunt, Jewe'. Yet, such bold statements in the face of authority are made with care. In neither case was there (yet) physical evidence of a misdemeanour, and both assertions were made with a smile to people they knew. As Scott (1985) observed, subaltern challenges to authority are rarely overt and explicit, but are instead conducted on the 'backstage' of village life.

In public and power-laden arenas, which is most often in the *kgotla* with visiting officials, sentiments are generally expressed that outline a grievance, but stop short of challenging - and often actually affirm - the structures of authority that gave rise to the grievance in the first place. For example, Amos, an elder from Khwai, asked DWNP officials in a meeting about their wildlife quota: 'If our animals are cancelled, as *you, the owners of the animals* say, then how will we live? They are our lives'. Roles affirming the status quo are played out in these settings, such as Mma Lebonang approaching the open microphone on her knees in a meeting with their MP, and the several people who prefaced their comments to him by: 'I am only a Mosarwa, so forgive me if I do not express myself well...'. In such circumstances, power is addressed and recognised even as it is protested against; a recognition that protest must adopt the forms and languages of domination in order to be heard (c.f. Roseberry 1996:81). At other times, the usual metaphors were inverted in the face of authority, such as in the way Smit - a regular hunter from Mababe - defended himself to DWNP officials who accused him of poaching ivory: 'I am a cow, and know nothing of the bush. I get lost when I go there'.

In some cases, complicity with the dominant values is seen as the best means of avoiding the stigma associated with being Mosarwa. In 1933, for example, a colonial commission reported that Basarwa who were settling down to cultivate and raise stock, were 'anxious to pay taxes, because the act establishes their position as men and not as animals' (Pim 1933:115). In a similar example, Wily (1976:7) reported that Basarwa at Bere were pleased that fees were introduced once their privately-initiated school was taken over by Ghanzi District Council, saying, 'Now we are seen as citizens'. Sometimes rhetoric reflecting dominant values is reproduced by Basarwa, especially by those that have been through school. Mma Kereleng's 32 year old daughter, Kereleng, who lives in Maun, explained, for example: 'The Council told us the way we are living is not good, and we should go to school to learn life'. Having taken their advice, she gave her view of Basarwa ethnicity:

> The only difference between me and other Batswana is my language, otherwise I am like any other Motswana. I do not have the *tlhaloganyo* [mindset] of a Mosarwa. The time of living in a Sesarwa manner has passed. If you use Sesarwa *tlhaloganyo*, you will be at the bottom, or else you can think like anyone else and be the same. Our *tlhaloganyo* was inferior. If we were well fed we were okay, we did not plan or think of the next day [Jewe, the daily springhare hunter, drinking nearby, agrees]. I have learnt from life in Maun. There you use money. Here, you wake up, dig *tswii*, then come and sell it. I see no progress from living in Khwai.

Kereleng's comments on the 'inferiority' of a Mosarwa mindset echo similar comments that Basarwa often make about the 'old ways' of thinking, that appear to parody perjorative dominant representations of Basarwa ethnicity. 'We Bushmen are still the same; our brains still work in the old ways', a Nharo informant told Guenther (1989:68), for example, after recounting their loss of livestock and crops in the creation myth. This is evident too in the degree of mistrust and suspicion with which the few families that do continue to live primarily by hunting and gathering are regarded. As with general representations of Basarwa by Batswana, their closer association with nature gives them an element of unpredictability. One such family is Mma Kanjiye and her daughters in Khwai (Plate 6.2). Soon after arriving in Khwai, I was warned that I should be wary of her, as she was able to ride people like a witch (*moloi*). Towards the end of my fieldwork, I spent ten days walking from Khwai to Gudigwa with her and her family. It was not until afterwards that I found out about the concern this had created among some people in Khwai, that she would kill me and use my body parts for medicine. A similar attitude prevailed with Nyamanyama and his family in Gudigwa (Plate 6.1). He was one of the most recent arrivals in Gudigwa, although during my fieldwork the following year he was in prison beginning a three year sentence for illegal possession of a rifle he used for hunting. Apart from being a regular hunter, he was also a healer.[70] Nyamanyama, his nickname by which everyone knew him, means *ledimo* - a

[70] Nyamanyama died in prison at the end of 1999, probably of an AIDS-related illness, which was most likely contracted from contact with blood in healing practices.

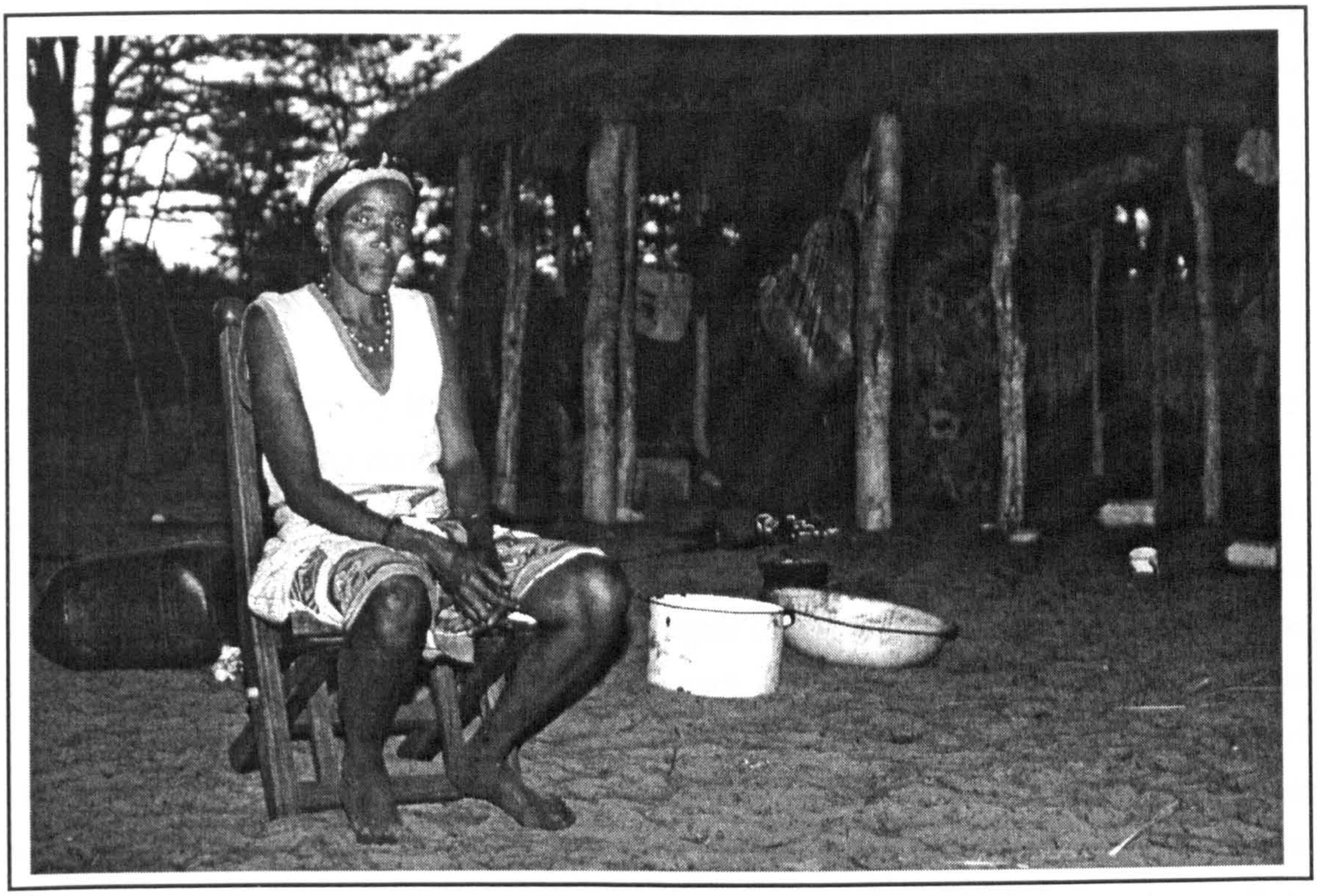

Plate 6.1: Kokoro, Nyamanyama's widow, in Gudigwa.

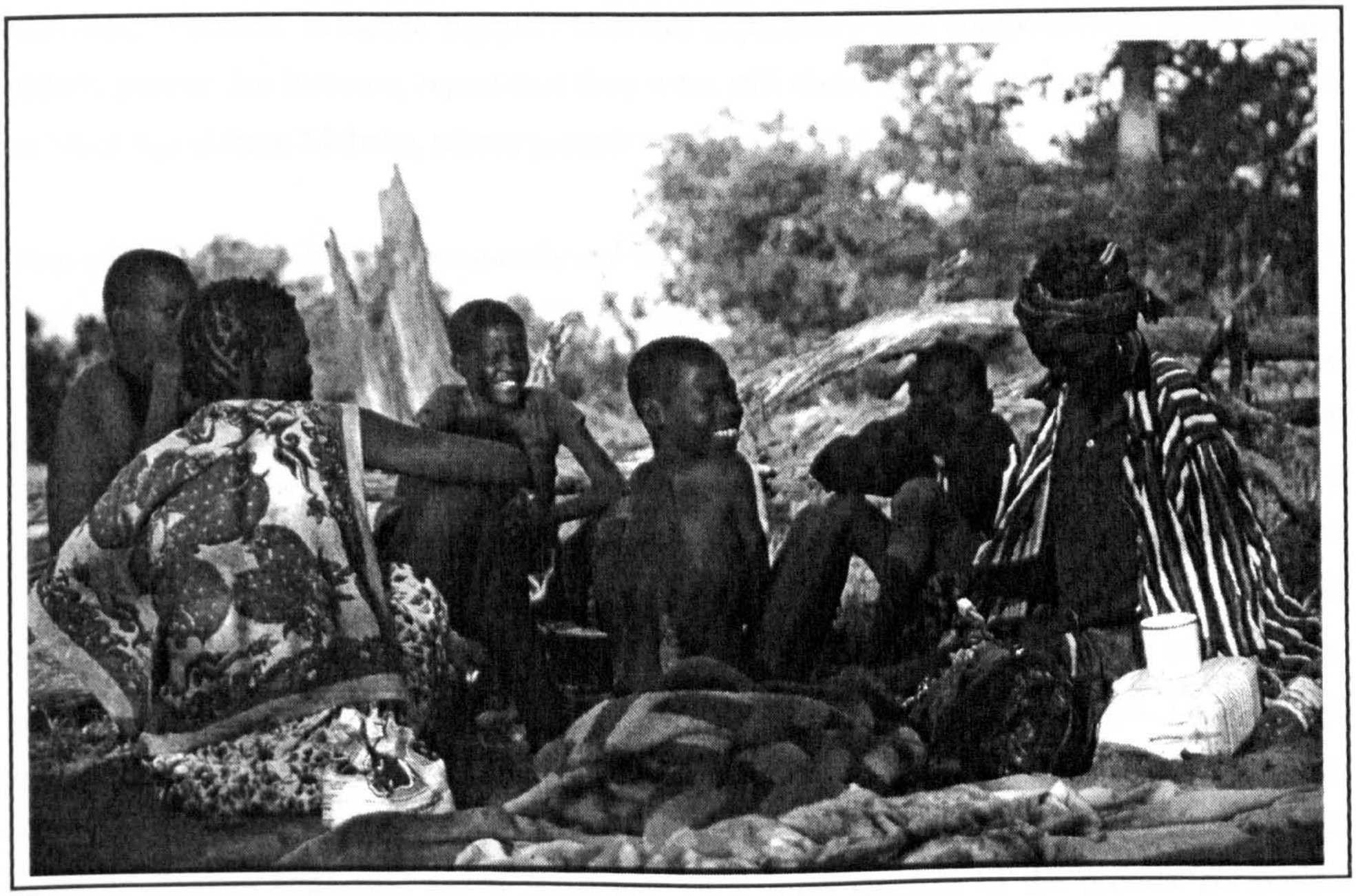

Plate 6.2: Mma Kanjiye and her daughters.

mythical half human, half supernatural giant. His 'deep' ethnicity provoked mistrust among his neighbours and kin, and stories were exaggerated about his supernatural attributes that emphasised his liminality. The same mistrust is shared of non Khwe-speaking Basarwa elsewhere. Derisively called *badimpanyana* (the little people with big bellies), stereotypes abound, such as Mma Kgosi's comment of !Xõ (none of whom live in the area around Mababe): 'They kill you if you pass them and do not offer them tobacco'.

Although interpretations by Basarwa of their own ethnicity often appear to be influenced by the representations of the dominant, pragmatic reasons were generally given for doing so. The key marker of hunting and gathering, for example, is a practice few stated they would want to live primarily by, even if given the opportunity. Nonetheless, this attitude is not simply an imitation of dominant derisory attitudes to this mode of subsistence. The reality of hunger, as well as the ravages of predators and diseases such as sleeping sickness and malaria, was commented upon by Basarwa and confirmed by early travellers: 'Hunger is the main cause of the dying out of this ancient race' concluded Passarge (1997[1907]:134), for example, from his journeys through the Kalahari at the end of the nineteenth century. Hunger was not always prevalent - remember Livingstone's comment about Basarwa in the Mababe area being 'fine, well-made men' with the abundance of game and wild fruit (1857:149) - but periodic lean times were inevitable in such a highly variable environment. In the absence of any formal statistics, anecdotal evidence suggests that life expectancy was comparatively short. Many elderly people, for instance, report that they were still children when their parents died, such as Mma Kgosi from Mababe, whose parents were both killed by buffalo.

Two of the most visible and commonly known markers of Basarwa ethnicity in Botswana are beehive-shaped huts, and leather clothes, both of which are stigmatised in wider society. Although they were common a generation ago in the northern sandveld, the only beehive huts now visible are chicken coops, and a showpiece on the edge of Mababe that some elders built 'to show our children how we used to live'. The only leather clothes worn are during dances (mostly for tourists and competitions), and were bought from Kuru Development Trust in Ghanzi rather than made by themselves. When I enquired as to why these markers were no longer common, I was often given the same reasons: leather clothes are cold; and beehive huts burn down easily, and cannot adequately protect belongings from the elements. Language is another immediate marker of ethnicity. Most families speak to their children largely in Setswana, and give the reason for doing so as their prospects in education, as the first four years of primary education are in Setswana. Thus, most children of the present generation grow up speaking Setswana better than Bugakhwedam or Ts'exadam. Many Basarwa in the

northern sandveld have long been proficient in Setswana, as reported by the Resident Commissioner on a trip through the Mababe flats in 1906 (BNA 1906c). However, it is only in this generation of universal access to education that knowledge of Setswana has been at the expense of the languages of their parents. Most parents also give their children Setswana or English names, saying that they do not 'know' Bugakhwedam or Ts'exadam names any more. As these examples demonstrate, the changing value that Basarwa give to visible markers associated with their ethnicity is motivated by both pragmatic reasons, and the stigma with which these markers have come to carry. Yet although these markers may be consciously avoided in an everyday sense, some residents attempt to objectify and preserve them, as in the example of the beehive hut in Mababe, the dancing troupes, or the wish by Dice, VDC chairman in Khwai, to start a 'school' to teach their children tracking skills.

That most Basarwa are physically more similar to their Bantu-speaking neighbours than the common stereotype of what Basarwa should look like, means that their identity is not necessarily embodied. They can choose whether to present themselves as Basarwa or not in contexts where their background is unknown. This flexibility is valued, and factors such as Sesarwa names, that could reveal identity, are generally avoided. Although most people have a Bugakhwedam or Ts'exadam name or nickname, younger people almost invariably use a non-Sesarwa name on official documents. One young man in Gudigwa, for example, found himself the butt of his friends' jokes for making the irreversible 'mistake' of using his Bugakhwedam name on his school certificates and National Registration card. As is well documented, the boundaries between 'hunter-gatherers' and their neighbours are more fluid than is often supposed (Woodburn 1997:348). Some Basarwa, especially those that have succeeded in formal sector employment, live in Maun, have partners from elsewhere, and speak Setswana to their children, such as Kereleng who works as a chef in a lodge, Galebone, a professional guide, Omphile a primary school teacher, Baeti, a game guard (Plate 6.3), and Kebuseditswe, a Council driver (Plate 6.4). Although such people may hardly emphasise a Basarwa identity in most contexts, they generally retain close links to Khwai, Mababe or Gudigwa, to which they pay regular visits.

In a sense, Moses embodied the complexities - or what would superficially appear as contradictions - of attitudes to Basarwa ethnicity. He was a regular hunter and defender of an essential Basarwa 'culture', but in other areas very much a conformist. Critical of the generation below him adopting dominant values, yet careful to avoid activities associated with the 'wilder' side of Sesarwa ethnicity: hunting trips that last longer than a day (unless for remuneration); climbing trees to find honey; or healing dances. He firmly stuck to the English

Plate 6.3: Baeti (from Khwai) with his family at his house in Maun.

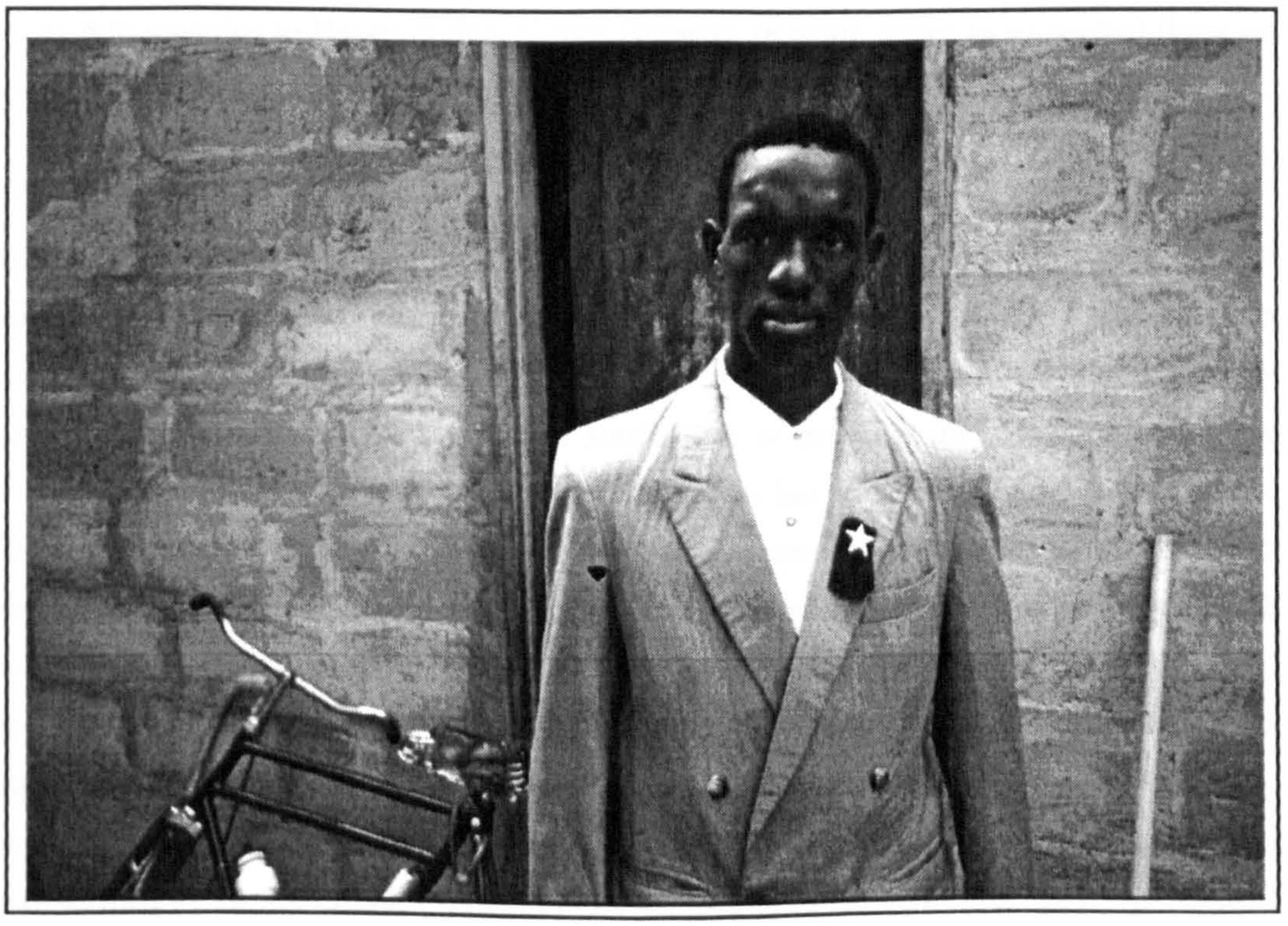

Plate 6.4: Kebuseditswe (from Khwai) at his house in Maun.

name given him when he began work as a young man for Khwai River Lodge, rather than //Xanitsho, the name he was given at birth. He was also explicitly sceptical of the value of drawing too deeply on practices associated with Sesarwa ethnicity:

> Mma Kanjiye's is the last family to live like Basarwa. They put *Bosarwa* ['Bushmanness'] forward as a goal, which is not right, because it is a hard life. They have taken their kids out of school so that they can be together. But what future do those children have?

As with others who have experienced the dehumanising effects of colonialism, Moses and other Basarwa in the northern sandveld have to differing degrees appropriated both the power of colonialism and an objectified version of their own 'tradition', welding them into a transcendent synthesis (Comaroff 1985:12). Escobar (1995:220) refers to this as 'hybridity'. Despite its biological connotations, it is not meant to imply the mixing of pure strands of tradition and modernity, but a shifting simultaneously backward (in their own terms) into cultural heritage and one's social group, and forward, cutting across social boundaries into progressive elements of other social formations. Through this process, the apparent contradictions are transformed and brought together in a unitary social structure. Integrating some of the institutional forms, symbols and techniques by which the dominant society defines its relationships to Basarwa thus allows Basarwa in some measure to control them on their own terms, and for their own benefit.

Conclusion

Coping with the stigma that so much of the society in which they operate places on the essential markers of Basarwa ethnicity poses a challenge to Basarwa. The challenge is an especially difficult one, as so many of the markers of Basarwa culture are interpreted by dominant society as not only backward and antithetical to progress and 'development', but illegal. Yet, the cultural struggle to be regarded as human has to be largely conducted *within* the idioms of dominant society (cf. Morris 1989:121). In practice this means that Basarwa in the northern sandveld have accommodated to, and resisted, dominant values to different degrees. People of different circumstances have developed differing *bricolages* of overlapping values, a hybridity that implies not just a creolisation along frontiers, but an ongoing process in which both dominant and subaltern have been transformed by the 'long conversation between them' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1997:59). Rather than being the broken beings described by Brody (1999:45) of 'indigenous people' who have 'lost' their traditions,[71]

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[71] 'The anger of tribal people is intense, but often directed inward. And they fall into a deep silence... They... have absorbed the lessons of their oppressors: indigenous customs, history and ways of speech

this *bricolage* contributes to an identity that, despite being born from difficulty and contradiction, can be relatively comfortably worn by most of its bearers.

Despite the complexities of how Basarwa have articulated with Setswana hegemony, narratives of identity often present a clear dichotomy between Basarwa and their Bantu-speaking neighbours. These dichotomies operate within the idioms of dominant society by reproducing representations of Basarwa as people of the bush and as people of poverty. At the same time, however, they challenge hegemonic representations by inverting their premises: their poverty not as a result of the inferiority of their culture, but because of oppression, discrimination and neglect; being people of the bush means not that they are wild and beyond sociality, but that they have rights to land and other natural resources. Metaphors of dominant culture are also used to translate the rights they imply to activities such as hunting and gathering. Expressions of identity are thus a logical form for Basarwa of contesting the regimes of authority that attempt to shape their lives, by contesting the wider webs of meaning that underpin the root causes of their material dispossession.

Although in lived reality, Basarwa modify some visible aspects of their ethnicity to reduce difference from conceptions of dominant cultures, Basarwa also verbally articulate strong expressions of *difference*. As Turner (1992:12) observed from his work with Kayapo in Brazil, this represents an attempt to 'objectify their own culture as an "ethnic identity", in a form in which it can serve to mobilise collective action in opposition to the dominant national society'. Asserting difference in this form is a means of attempting to maintain a degree of autonomy in a socio-economic environment where integration means a continuation of inequality (cf. Saugestad 1993). As a resident of Gudigwa explained in a meeting about their Community Trust: 'The government says we are all Batswana, but us Basarwa are different. If we are mixed with them, we will be pulled into their culture and *be under them*'. The following chapter examines how expressions of difference are used by Basarwa in attempts to shape CBNRM interventions according to their own priorities.

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are matters of shame... . Shame and grief, accumulated from generation to generation, can tie the tongue tight' Brody (1999:45).

PART III

DEVELOPMENT

Chapter Seven

CBNRM: contesting development

You cannot put a tie on a buffalo, or give an animal bread, and say that is development.
Moses, Khwai

Moses' comment, made to me one day as we walked through the bush discussing the proposed Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Programme, illustrates the contested nature of 'development'; the ideal worlds it proposes, and the assumptions it makes on how these ideal worlds should be achieved. Using the metaphor of wildlife, Moses questioned the appropriateness of government development policies, particularly CBNRM, as they were being implemented in his area. He went on elaborate:

> We Basarwa and lions and animals are one. You can't take me and put me in Serowe [a large Setswana village] and then say I am developed. But government officials come here and say we are not developed.

His challenge to the assumptions of official notions of development was predicated on an *assertion of difference* from dominant society, and thus of difference in what 'development' should entail for the residents of his village. The Setswana word for 'development', *ditlhabololo,* which Moses used, is used as well by officials, NGOs and other residents of the northern sandveld alike, to imply a myriad of different strategies and aims. The different visions behind this same word are fiercely contested, and it is these contestations that form the basis of this chapter.

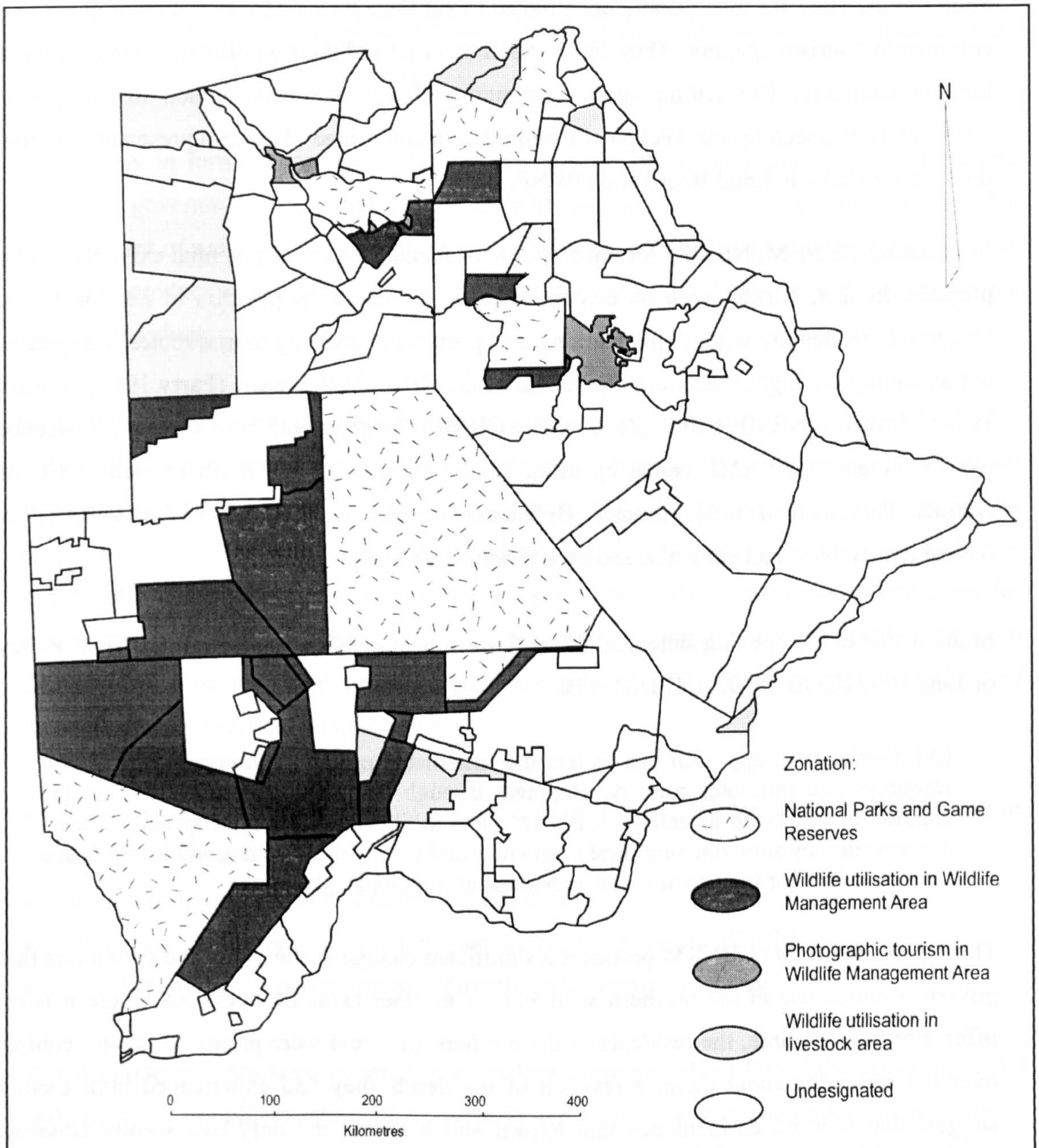
Throughout the 1990s, most government officials who visited the northern sandveld to talk about 'development' did so in the context of the new CBNRM Programme. Through this impending programme, they promised a revolutionary change in the way that development would be approached in these rural areas. For the first time (in the era of conservation), the residents of the northern sandveld were told that they would be able to decide themselves how to use and manage the natural resources in their area, and thus benefit directly from them. But as the decade passed, varying degrees of disillusionment set in among residents of Khwai, Gudigwa and Mababe. As Moses' comment implies, CBNRM did not seem after all to be so easily moulded to the hopes, aspirations and plans that formed their visions of what 'development' would constitute.

Rather than attempting to ascertain whether or not development interventions in the guise of CBNRM 'work' or not, this chapter examines what they *do*. CBNRM is in its early stages in the northern sandveld, and pronouncements on its 'success' or 'failure' would be not only premature but also misguided. The extent to which it achieves its objectives or not is likely to be overshadowed by its unintended consequences; the processes it sets in motion that were not part of its original plan. This chapter focuses on the dynamics of the introduction of CBNRM in the northern sandveld: how it was introduced; how it was perceived locally; the ensuing debates it aroused; and the indirect implications of its introduction. The first section focuses on the state and its implementation of CBNRM. It argues that CBNRM serves, in some ways perhaps unintentionally, as a vehicle for the extension of bureaucratic power over people in the northern sandveld. The second section focuses on the people of the northern sandveld, and their attempts to use CBNRM to address their own priorities, particularly the reversal of their loss of access to, and control over, land and natural resources. The third section examines the important implications of CBNRM, most especially its unintended role in promoting local political mobilisation to protect resource rights.

CBNRM: development and power

A formal CBNRM programme began in Botswana in 1990, alongside a number of other southern and eastern African countries. It was initiated by the USAID-funded Natural Resources Management Project (NRMP), working closely with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) – who now carry prime responsibility for its implementation. In preparation for the programme, much of Botswana was divided up into Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs), some of which could be allocated to specific villages for use under CBNRM. Under the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992, each CHA was zoned for various types of use that determined whether it could be used for consumptive or non-

consumptive purposes, and whether it could be allocated to a local community or not (Map 7.1). This 'community' could be a single village (as with Khwai and with Mababe), or a number of villages (as with Gudigwa and its four neighbouring villages). Eligible villages



Map 7.1: Boundaries of CHAs in Botswana, showing those that have been designated for allocation to local communities.

have been encouraged to elect a management committee and legally register a Community Trust. A functioning management committee can request an annual quota of wildlife on behalf of residents for subistence hunting, whereas a Community Trust can apply for the head-lease for their CHA from the Land Board (or the state if, like Mababe, their CHA lies on State Land). They are then usually encouraged to sublease their CHA and hunting quota to a commercial tourism operator. They can also sell all or part of their wildlife quota to a licensed hunting company. The setting up of Community Trusts and participation of villages in CBNRM is overseen by the Technical Committee; a committee of three representatives from the District Council, Land Board and DWNP.

In initiating CBNRM, NRMP identified both Khwai and Mababe as potential exemplary pilot projects. In fact, Khwai, with its combination of low human population in relation to the resource base, healthy wildlife populations, and position on existing tourist routes, was picked out as having the highest economic potential of the CHAs in Botswana (Parry 1989, Ecosurv 1994). However, NRMP's attempts to initiate CBNRM projects with both Khwai and Mababe were rebutted, and NRMP ended up using Chobe enclave, on the northern side of Chobe National Park, as their 'model project'. By the time I completed my fieldwork in 1998, neither Khwai nor Mababe had yet embarked on a formal CBNRM programme.

In the words of the opening statement of the Government of Botswana's draft CBNRM Policy of June 1999 (GOB 1999:1), CBNRM is:

> [A] development approach that fosters the sustainable use and conservation of natural resources and promotes rural development through community participation and the creation of economic incentives. CBNRM aims to alleviate rural poverty and advance conservation by strengthening rural economies and empowering communities to manage resources for their long-term social, economic and ecological benefits.

There is no doubt that CBNRM proposes a significant change in the terms and conditions that govern resource use in the northern sandveld, as in other areas of Botswana where it is on offer. For the first time, the residents of the northern sandveld were promised greater control over the resources about them, a reversal of the trends they had experienced until then. I suggest that it is no co-incidence that Khwai and Mababe, the only two wholly Basarwa CHAs in Ngamiland, would be among the last to register Community Trusts, even though they were among the first to be approached to do so. This is not because Basarwa deem CBNRM to be irrelevant; quite the opposite. CBNRM promises to be of crucial importance to Basarwa, for the following reasons:

- It addresses issues central to their identity and subsistence practices; land, wildlife, and natural resources.
- It appears to hold out the promise of reversing the trend of alienation of these resources.
- It opens up debates of whose aspirations, values and priorities development agendas are based on.
- Areas targeted for CBNRM in Botswana (land marginal for arable or livestock use) are often those in which Basarwa live.

Their delay in forming trusts was due to intense negotiation, both among themselves, and with the government, on what form CBNRM should take in its promise to devolve management of natural resources. The debate has essentially been about what the best use is of a very productive natural environment, and what strategies should be used to adequately harness its values.

As a process of planned social and economic change initiated by the government, CBNRM is above all a 'development' intervention. Although a large body of literature has built up around CBNRM initiatives throughout southern Africa in the last decade, a significant proportion of it has been dedicated to addressing its efficacy in promoting local-level *conservation*. This is certainly an important question, especially for the many practitioners for whom this is a primary aim in CBNRM. However, examining the relationship between CBNRM as a development project, social control, and the reproduction of relations of inequality raises four critical questions:

- What are the local histories and priorities related to central tenets of CBNRM such as land, wildlife and authority?
- Whose interests is CBNRM functioning to serve?
- What forms of power are entrenched or challenged through CBNRM?
- To what extent is 'empowerment' (directly or indirectly) achieved?

The first question has been covered in preceding chapters, which traced the political, social and economic peripheralisation of Basarwa by the ascending Batawana polity in Ngamiland (Chapter Two), and their gradual alienation from land and wildlife resources (Chapter Three). This has happened to people for whom natural resources, particularly wildlife, have formed not only an important part of their subsistence base (Chapter Five), but also of their identity as well (Chapter Six). With this background, the second, third and fourth questions inform much of the content of this chapter.

Although CBNRM presents itself as a *technical* programme, it raises issues that are clearly *political.* This is not only because it ostensibly promotes 'empowerment', which is by very definition political as it implies a redistribution of power, but also because it claims to address issues of resource tenure, in which the government and its policies are intimately implicated. CBNRM has thus become an arena in which state power is both extended and challenged. In this arena, it becomes evident that the ways in which power itself works may have unexpected outcomes. With a focus on the dynamics of bureaucratic power, Ferguson (1990) argues that the question as to whether development *works* or not is obsolete; many large-scale development projects patently do not realise their aims. Our attention should rather be on what they *do.* The intentions behind development projects, whether explicit or hidden behind rhetoric, do not always produce the results they set out to achieve, in the manner they intended to achieve them. Nonetheless, they produce an effect:

> Whatever interests may be at work and whatever they may think they are doing, they can only operate through a complex set of social and cultural structures so deeply embedded and so ill-perceived that the outcome may only be a baroque and unrecognisable transformation of the original intention (Ferguson 1990:17).

Ferguson's analysis of a development project in Lesotho revealed that the supposedly technical and apolitical measures instituted by the development project brought with them political 'side effects' of greater consequence than the original intentions behind the project. He terms this the *Anti-Politics Machine*; a process the development intervention set in motion, that operated to depoliticise everything it touched by hiding political realities, while simultaneously functioning to expand bureaucratic state power.

Through exploring the dynamics of CBNRM as implemented in the northern sandveld, I argue that it too has provided a point of entry for an intervention serving a variety of political uses, particularly the extension of the government's authority into areas where it had hitherto been marginal. This is not a new argument for CBNRM-type programmes. In one of the few pieces of research on CBNRM in southern Africa that has made its focus the state, Hill (1996:106) notes that the CAMPFIRE programme in Zimbabwe[72] does increase local participation in conservation, but at the same time serves state interests:

> The state uses conservation policies in much the same way as it uses taxation, investment, interest rate, or land resettlement policies; to establish and extend its own

[72] The CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme For Indigenous Resources) project in Zimbabwe is among the earliest and best known of southern Africa's CBNRM programmes.

> interests, which in a relatively new and tenuous polity, centre on authority maintenance and extension.

Hill notes four ways in which CAMPFIRE potentially works to benefit state authority (1996:104-5). It:

- legitimates locally the authority of the government in directing conservation.
- integrates rural villagers into the national conservation scheme, encouraging them to internalise its values.
- promotes economic reciprocity by raising money locally, that the government disburses.
- promotes accountability between conservation officials and local co-operatives.

While each of these factors promotes greater *articulation* between the state and rural-dwellers, Hill gives no evidence that they operate in practice to extend state authority. The only data he provides substantiates the argument that CAMPFIRE is essentially used as a rural taxation programme, with most funds ending up being controlled by the state. Madzudzo (1999) makes the same argument in his analysis of CAMPFIRE, as does Matenga (1999) on ADMADE, its sister organisation in Zambia. As revenues from CBNRM in Botswana are mostly returned to Community Trusts themselves, rather than District Councils, this specific argument is not relevant for Botswana. It is clearly in the interests of the state to extend its authority to areas where it has been marginal, and, as Hill argues, CBNRM-type programmes provides the potential to do so. However, beyond the monetary aspect, none of these authors make it any clearer whether state authority is actually extended on the local level, and if so, *how* this happens. Through examining several aspects of its operationalisation, I show how CBNRM has so far acted as a vehicle, both directly and indirectly, for the extension of state authority over the people in the northern sandveld.

CBNRM and the capitalisation of nature

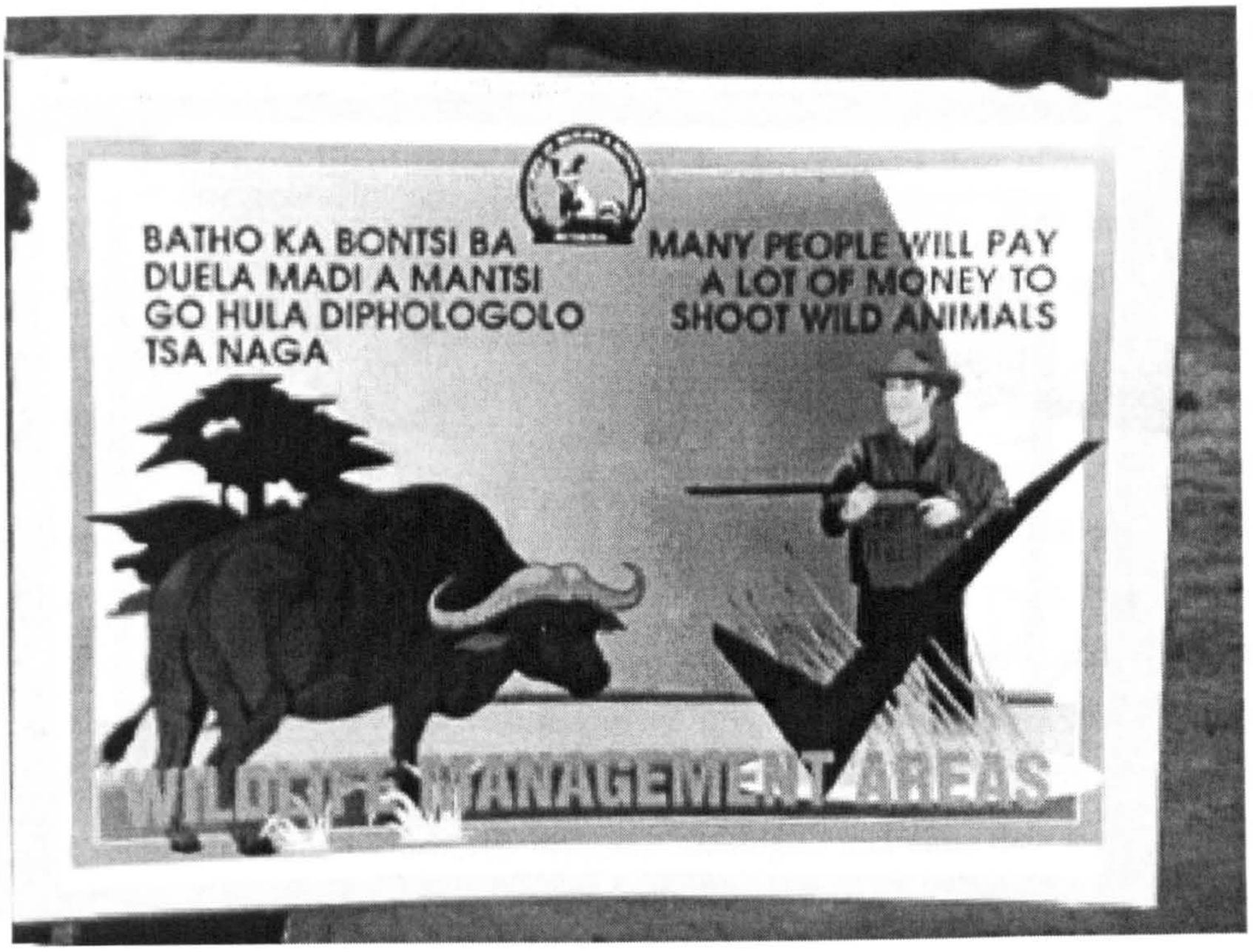
Like much development policy in Botswana, CBNRM is based almost entirely on monetarist assumptions, in which the value of the resources is rated according to their capitalising potential. The draft CBNRM Policy of June 1997 (GOB 1997b:2) clearly demonstrates the conflation of 'development' with economic growth in its method:

> As a conservation based development program, CBNRM promotes rural economic growth and encourages conservation by providing communities with incentives to: (1) diversify local business activities, (2) increase the value of existing resources, (3) allow local communities to contribute to resource management, and (4) produce economic models which support national enterprises.

Amid questions as to the adequacy of the educational component of CBNRM to potential beneficiaries in Botswana (K. Taylor 1998, Twyman 1998), this economic aspect is the one component that has been repeatedly emphasised to potential participants in the CBNRM programme. The educational tools prepared for use in encouraging community involvement in CBNRM; a video, a series of posters, and a leaflet on joint ventures, all promote the economic potential of CBNRM as its selling point to potential participant villages. The series of posters, for example (Fig. 7.1), include a white hunter pointing a gun at a buffalo, with the caption, 'Many people will pay a lot of money to shoot wild animals'. The next poster presents a hunter holding his gun to one side as a cow replaces the buffalo, and the caption, 'Who will pay money to hunt your cattle? Nobody'. The same scenario is reproduced for photographic tourists in the following two posters. The series patently ignores the monetary and non-monetary values local people place on both cattle and wildlife (examined in Chapter Five) beyond their potential for generating money from tourists.

Community Trusts technically have the choice what to do with their CHA and the annual wildlife quota, which are outlined in an educational booklet produced by NRMP and DWNP on joint ventures (DWNP n.d.(b)). The possibilities it outlines range from the Community Trust simply subleasing the land and wildlife quota to a commercial operator for an annual fee, to the 'community' acting as a safari operator themselves, but hiring a skilled management company to market and run necessary aspects of the enterprise. Nonetheless, in the northern sandveld, it is *only* the first option – a simple sublease to an operator – that officials present in any detail, a pattern also noted by Twyman (1998) in western Kalahari. Officials implementing CBNRM therefore push a very narrow agenda, based on two key elements: (1) the commercialisation of natural resources; and (2), the exploitation of their commercial value by a private operator, for which the Community Trust receives royalties. This agenda has been wholeheartedly adopted and pursued by government officials at all levels, who often reinforce it in village meetings. Take, for example, the message that Bahiti Temane, the Minister of Parliament for Ngamiland, gave as he visited Mababe and Khwai on 5th and 6th February 1998 on a ministerial tour:

> Chobe enclave has made P65,000 in the first year, P200,000 in the second, and P285,000 third year from leases. You yourselves must ask for your land, set up a committee and a trust, and make business from your land. Sankuyu and Ditshiping [neighbouring villages] have their land already... Botswana is the seventh highest tourist destination in Africa. In 1996/7, 935,000 tourists visited Botswana and brought money into our economy, and P4,500,000 was paid annually for leases… . We know that animals cause problems, but they support tourism. I also know that our grandparents lived off animals, but when change comes, we must embrace it… . I came with the message of tourism, with that you can find a purpose for your land.



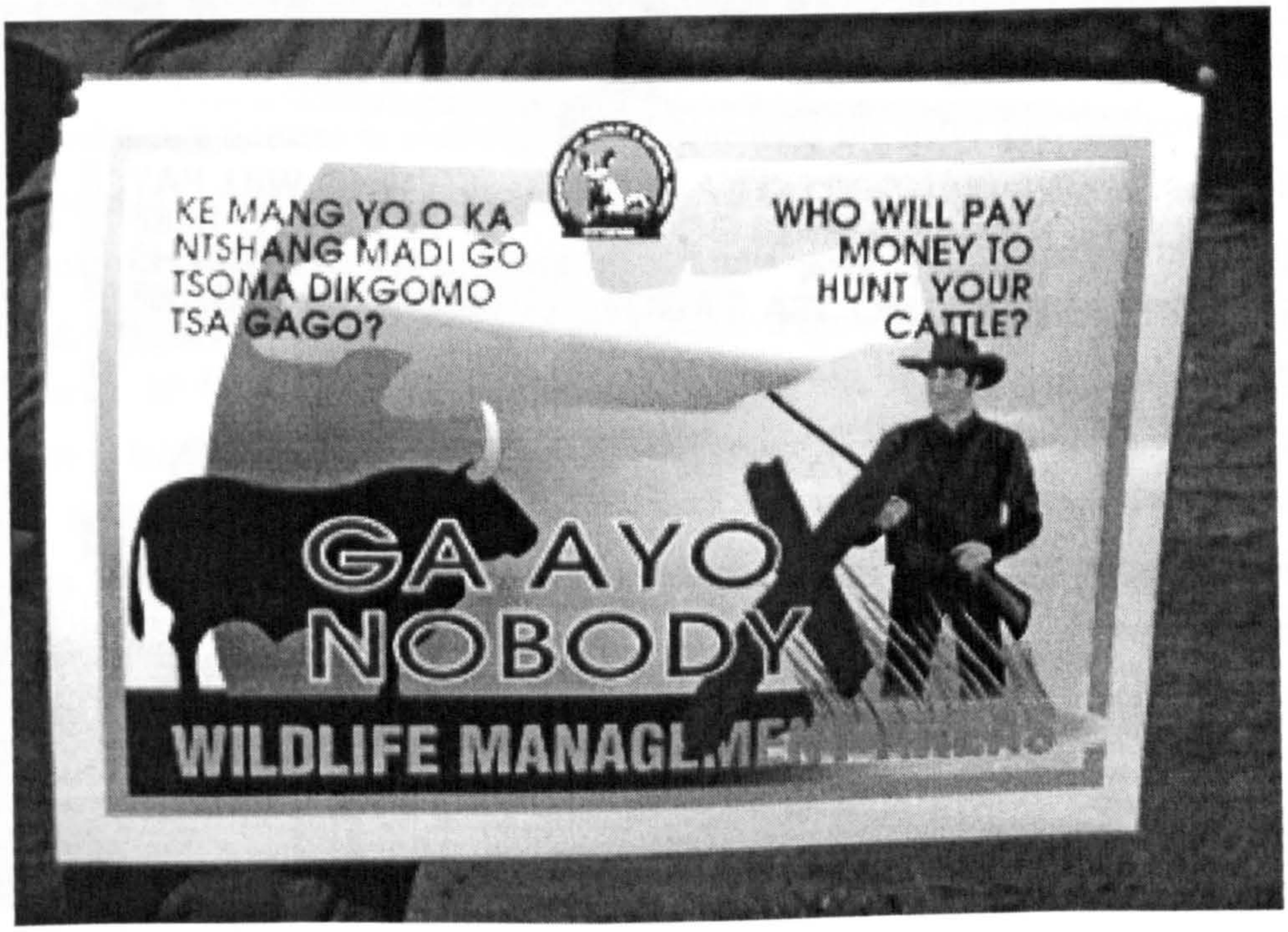
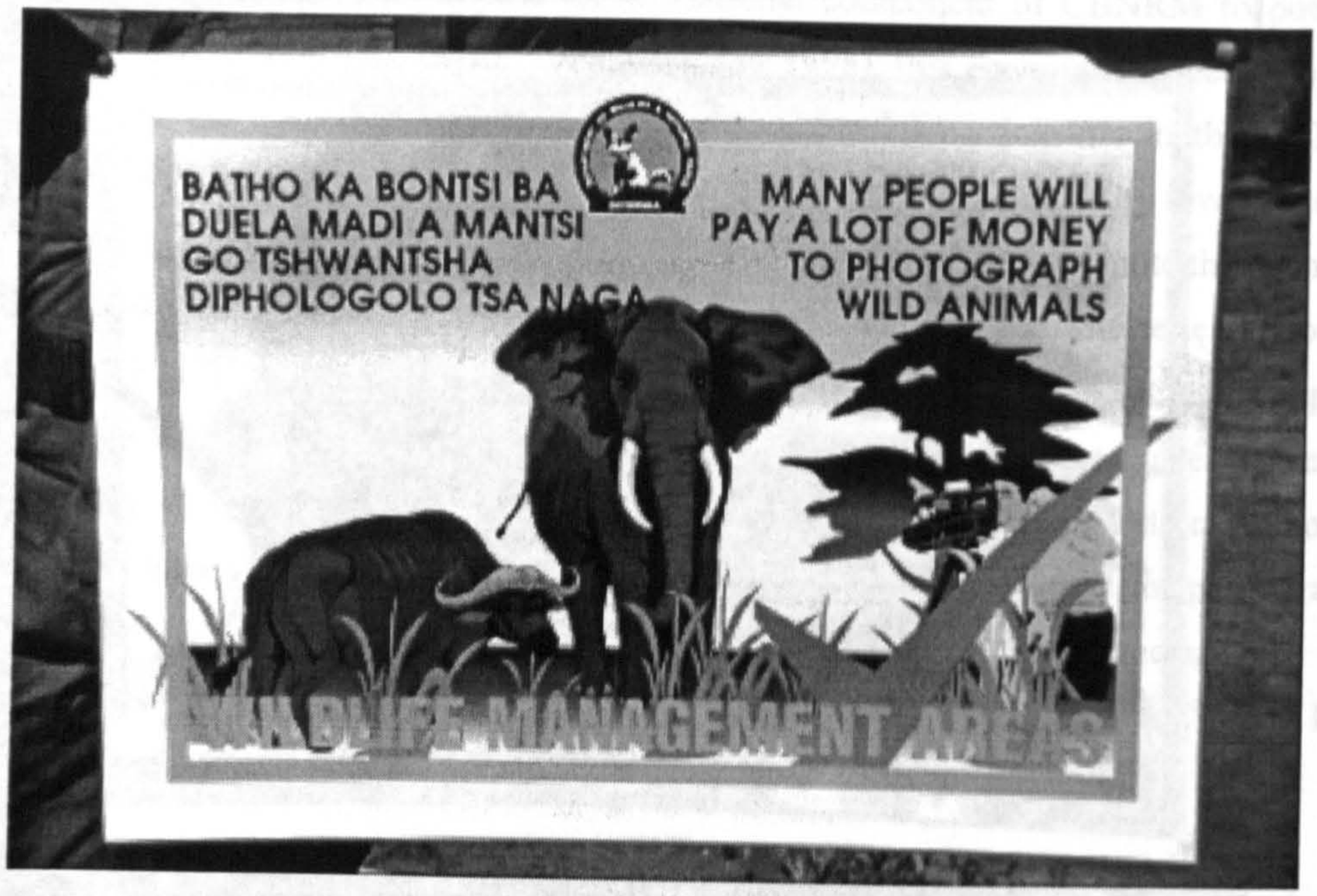


Figure 7.1a,b: Posters used to encourage villages to participate in CBNRM (Photos: C. Twyman).



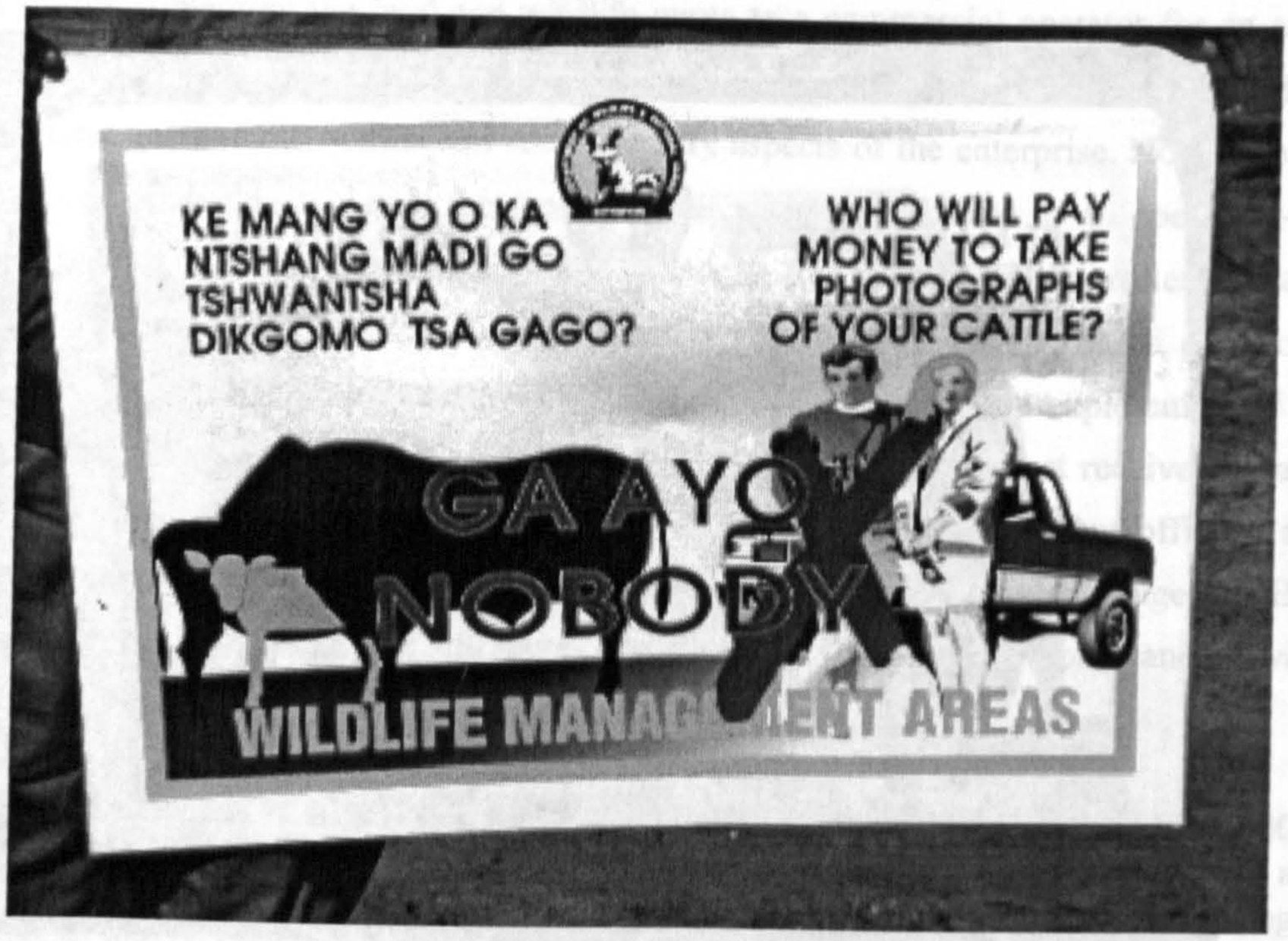


Figure 7.1c,d: Posters used to encourage villages to participate in CBNRM (Photos: C. Twyman).

Apart from throwing out huge figures in an attempt to dazzle his audience into the riches that CBNRM could bring, his speech was loaded with suggestions that for Basarwa to truly 'develop' they would have to embrace the option the government was offering them. For example, the income from tourism would give them a 'purpose' for their land, with the implication that this could not be constituted by any other (non-monetary) use of the land.

It thus becomes clear that the capitalisation of nature in this manner is not ideologically neutral. It relies on what Escobar (1995:204) refers to as the 'semiotic conquest of territories'. CBNRM transforms this 'unutilised' land to sites of production under the guise of rural development and conservation, and the 'communities' that live in them are made into 'stewards' of nature. This ideology allows the recognition of locals as owners of resources, but within very prescribed limits and only inasmuch as they accept to treat it - and themselves - as reservoirs of capital. Whether or not its intended beneficiaries comply with its aims may, therefore, be more a function of radically different ideologies and aims than a passive failure to realise the monetary benefits that CBNRM can bring.

Participation or paternalism?

Writing on land reform in Scotland, Boyd (in Wightman 1999:72) argues that, 'We have institutionalised participation in which the State decides and determines the policies and permitted actions and the terms of reference for them'. Perhaps it is because policies claiming to reform land tenure threaten to challenge so fundamentally the status quo, that governments worldwide tend to co-opt them so as to contain their effect. There are two key areas in which CBNRM does not decentralise management to local inhabitants, over and above its policy of encouraging a simple sublease of their land and quota to a commercial operator. The first is in the boundaries of CHAs, which are predetermined by the government, and bear little resemblance to land claimed by villages as historically their own. As such, some villages may be outside the CHAs that are allocated to them, like Gudigwa and (initially) Khwai. The second is in the annual wildlife offtake quota, which is determined by DWNP with no local consultation. These quotas are based on wildlife surveys that have wide margins of error (Dangerfield 1995, Perkins and Ringrose 1996), and in some cases include animals that are not even found locally.

In pursuing its agenda, government officials have not just presented arguments *for* commodifying natural resources, but *against* local attitudes perceived to be an obstacle to achieving their commodification. In Minister Temane's speech to Khwai, for example, he continued from tourism to make reference to their stubborn refusal to move from their present location. Using threats to withhold infrastructural development, as well as more benevolent

expressions of concern for their welfare, he attempted to persuade Khwai to follow the government's agenda of both relocation and CBNRM:

> You say you want to stay here because your ancestors were here, but whites come here and leave their ancestors' bones far away. Hardbattle and Sesana [of First People of the Kalahari] went to lie to people in the United States of America that the government wants to move people from their ancestors' land [in Central Kalahari Game Reserve]. But look at them [he gestures to the thirty or so government officials that are accompanying him on his tour]. They are from everywhere, and they are so developed. We don't want *ujamaa* [as in Tanzania] to pull people together. But if people don't want to move, all we can do is not give them development, and they will be left behind. If you had left here and gone to Mababe or Sankuyu, your numbers would be greater and you would get more development. Great nations are made from different people coming together like USA. You can't isolate yourselves... . When I addressed a meeting in Puduhudu, a man stood up saying, 'I am Thapi, a Mosarwa. Now we see that we here are like the rest of Botswana, that we can sell our animals. Are we lions, hyenas that we can only eat animals?'... . One of the reasons that we want you to move is that wild animals are dangerous.

The message to Khwai and Mababe, that they should conform to the government's agenda, is a consistent one. It was echoed, for example in a meeting held on 14th February 1998 by the Technical Committee in Khwai. They gallantly gave up one Saturday to attend a meeting in Khwai aimed at resolving intra-village disagreements that had divided Khwai's Interim Management Committee. One of the Technical Committee introduced their contribution by saying:

> These are things of the government, and if you don't make them work, the government will, and you will lose out. The government knows what is going on in Khwai. They have been asking us what is going on, as they want this land to be used for tourism... Your problem is that you are obsessed with hunting.

Although the language used by officials in meetings is not often so explicit – precipitated in this case by frustration at Khwai's slowness in forming a Community Trust – these examples illustrate that those implementing CBNRM often do little to escape the paternalism that characterises most government interventions aimed at Basarwa.

A meeting to approve Mababe's draft constitution, held by a DWNP official at Mababe's *kgotla* on 15th May 1998, illustrates how official agendas may be achieved, even under the guise of participation. By this stage, Mababe had a draft constitution, based on a *pro forma* version that could be used for any Community Trust. The sought-after approval consisted of the DWNP official reading out each main point (translating from English into Setswana as he read), at which the people present clapped their hands. While the meeting carried an air of

participation, most of those present had little understanding of the points that the DWNP official was reading out. What they did understand was that they were supposed to clap, affirming the usual structure of interaction between government officials and village residents in the *kgotla*. After the meeting, I asked Mma Tiro, the headman's middle-aged daughter, what she thought of the meeting. 'A lot of people don't understand what is going on', she replied. 'The old people are at fault', she continued, with reference to other similar meetings, 'because the young come and report back from their meetings with Tau [DWNP representative on the Technical Committee], but when you ask someone like Pekenene [an elderly resident] afterwards what was said, he says he doesn't understand'.

Because of their history of being treated as perpetual minors, Basarwa are especially prone to being subjected to such forms of paternalism, a pattern noted too by Twyman (1998:752, 2000) in the implementation of CBNRM in Okwa WMA in Ghanzi district. Paternalistic attitudes to the supposed beneficiaries of CBNRM characterise not only its practice, but elements of its conception as well. Primary among these is the characterisation of local people as inevitably harming their environment of their own accord, thus legitimating the intervention offered by CBNRM. This is clearly implied in the 1997 draft CBNRM Policy, which states that 'CBNRM incentives provided by the government endorse a shift by community members away from activities causing harm to surrounding ecological systems and towards positive economic development' (GOB 1997b:2).

Notwithstanding such slips, the language of CBNRM is generally one of 'participation' and 'empowerment'. For example, the paragraph prior to the one quoted above states that, 'Inclusive, participatory procedures are the cornerstone of all CBNRM programs' (GOB 1997:2). Commenting on the widespread use of such popular terms in everything from business management strategies to development-speak, James (1999:14) comments:

> 'Empowerment' seems to have little more body to it than responsibility delegated from above, or from the centre, to monitor others below or beyond one, for whose activities one has to be accountable. One seems to be 'empowered' to take a share of management responsibility and decision-making, but the contemporary sense of the word does not seem to entail any direct control of resources or scope to join with others at the same level in the structure to pursue collective bargaining with the centre. It seems oddly like the operation of 'Indirect Rule' in British colonial Africa.

Despite its progressive rhetoric, the evidence so far suggests that the efficacy of CBNRM is gauged not so much on the empowerment of rural-dwellers, but its ability to co-opt them to adopt *official* priorities of conservation and development (cf. Twyman 1998:747).

Regularity and chaoticisation

The draft CBNRM policy of June 1999 (GOB 1999:41) concludes with the salutary point that:

> All programs must respect the integrity, importance, and distinctions of cultural traditions by allowing communities to identify and define their own development goals and priorities.

This is an emphasis that was not present in earlier drafts, perhaps indicating an increased sensitivity to local-level diversity by CBNRM policy-makers. Nonetheless, there is little evidence of the radical changes in the structure and approach of CBNRM that would be necessary to achieve this. That villages like Khwai have met such consistent opposition to their plans, despite the assertion that client villages should be allowed to define their own development goals, prompts examination as to why this is happening.

Part of the answer is to be found in those locally most benefiting from the status quo; the lodge owners, whose control of the upper end of the lucrative tourism industry keeps their voices heard. In the words of Mma Lebonang from Khwai, 'the lodge owners are strong with their money'. Tourism operators are those most immediately threatened by villagers attempting to assert a form of CBNRM different from the government blueprint, as we shall see of Khwai in the next section. For the owner of one these lodges, the possibility of Khwai being allocated NG19 and trying to run their own safari operation would represent yet another failure of chaotic 'Africanisation':

> I say to myself, 'Oh shit, its Africa all over again!' Community Areas are not going to work, and Khwai village is one example.

While the terminology of bureaucrats would obviously be different, the same principle stands for a government seeking to increase the 'legibility' (Scott 1998) of a peripheral section of its population; the 'chaotic' implications of encouraging local initiative poses a threat to established regularity and authority.

I suggest three particular reasons why those implementing CBNRM pursue a narrow agenda of encouraging villages to lease their land and wildlife quota to a commercial tourism operator:

- A standard blueprint for CBNRM is easier to administer than every CHA pursuing a different project.

- The most lucrative option (at least in the short term) is to lease the land and quota to a professional operator.
- This agenda does little to challenge the established status quo.

This combination of factors appears particularly efficient at maintaining the government blueprint of CBNRM as a simple 'joint venture' programme on the local level. For the officers on the ground attempting to achieve measurable results, this blueprint achieves rapid economic results with minimum administrative hassle. For tourism operators, who command considerable financial influence in this lucrative industry, this blueprint poses little real threat to their sites of production. These local-level factors work very well to make CBNRM not only a programme that efficiently delivers an administratively facile blueprint, but also in a more complex way it serves the extension of a faceless bureaucratic power. It achieves this in part by attempting to co-opt local populations into a regularity that facilitates their bureaucratic control. This standardising agenda need not be the product of individuals consciously seeking to extend bureaucratic authority. It may simply be the easiest approach for those implementing CBNRM to take. Nonetheless, like Ferguson's *Anti-Politics Machine* which is set into motion by the interests and logic of 'power' more than the deliberate design of any individuals, CBNRM proves useful in extending the authority of the state into these marginal areas. As such, the buffer zones around national parks, where most community CHAs are located, constitute not local zones of empowerment, but a geographical *expansion* of state authority beyond the boundaries of protected areas and into rural communities (cf. Neumann 1997:564).

The responses of Khwai, Mababe, and Gudigwa, to the government's CBNRM initiative illustrates the difference in priorities between them and the government's very narrow *de facto* agenda, as well as the ongoing struggle they have faced in attempting to put their own priorities into place.

Local priorities in CBNRM

That 'development' in its various forms is such a ubiquitously sought-after commodity, by bureaucrats as well as rural residents, is perhaps underestimated by many critical development theorists. Escobar's (1995:216) claim of local 'resistance to development', and Manzo's (1991) attention to the 'counter-modernist practices of Third World grassroots actors' deservedly focus attention on the means by which official development programmes may be subverted on the local level. Nonetheless, they can miss the subtleties by which the hegemony of development is in some senses successful; 'oppositional' movements to development are

rarely completely oppositional. Basarwa, for example, *do* see themselves as embracing modernism, although on their own terms. Local models *do not escape* the pervasive discourse of 'development', and many of the technical aspects of official development programmes, such as the provision of basic services - water, health and education - are embraced.

Essentially, the disagreements in the northern sandveld over what 'development' should entail centre on *control*. Official agendas in development are about growth, about capital, about technology, about becoming modern. The only meaningful way to challenge such models of development is to challenge their order of discourse; expressed by Escobar (1995:216) as, 'restructuring the political economies of truth through the collective practice of social actors that asserts other types of knowledge and experience'. Put simply, this means asserting and living the validity of alternative models of development, which involves contesting meanings associated with 'progress' and 'development' as well as the political power that attempts to define these concepts (cf. Keesing 1992:232). This is to some extent what Basarwa are attempting to do with CBNRM, although, just as expressions of identity do not always escape hegemonic frames of reference, such contestation is not complete. Furthermore, local actions with respect to CBNRM are a complex compound of their own alternative priorities, and the very real limitations dictated by the parameters of CBNRM.

Culture is central to this stage upon which development is contested. Contestation over what development should entail becomes one expressed on both sides in terms of values placed on certain ways of life. However, to look at the development encounter as a clash between two cultural systems would be simplistic. It is rather an intersection that creates *new* forms of social positioning (Pigg 1992) in the interaction between Basarwa and the state. The distinctions between these oppositions (such as *Sesarwa* and *Sekgoa*) therefore lose their sharpness in practice, although they retain their relevance as ideological concepts. This will become evident in exploring the issues over, and means by which, Basarwa engage with official CBNRM policy.

Contesting access to land

Within the context of a progressive loss of access to land, halting – even attempting to reverse – this process has become of primary importance to Basarwa. CBNRM, in opening up dialogue about local management of land, has become an arena in which claims to land are made and contested at the local level. Recent research elsewhere, such as with Damara in northwestern Namibia (Sullivan 1999), suggests that this is an emerging pattern in CBNRM projects where land alienation has been prevalent.

Plate 7.1: Women from Khwai in a meeting with government officials.

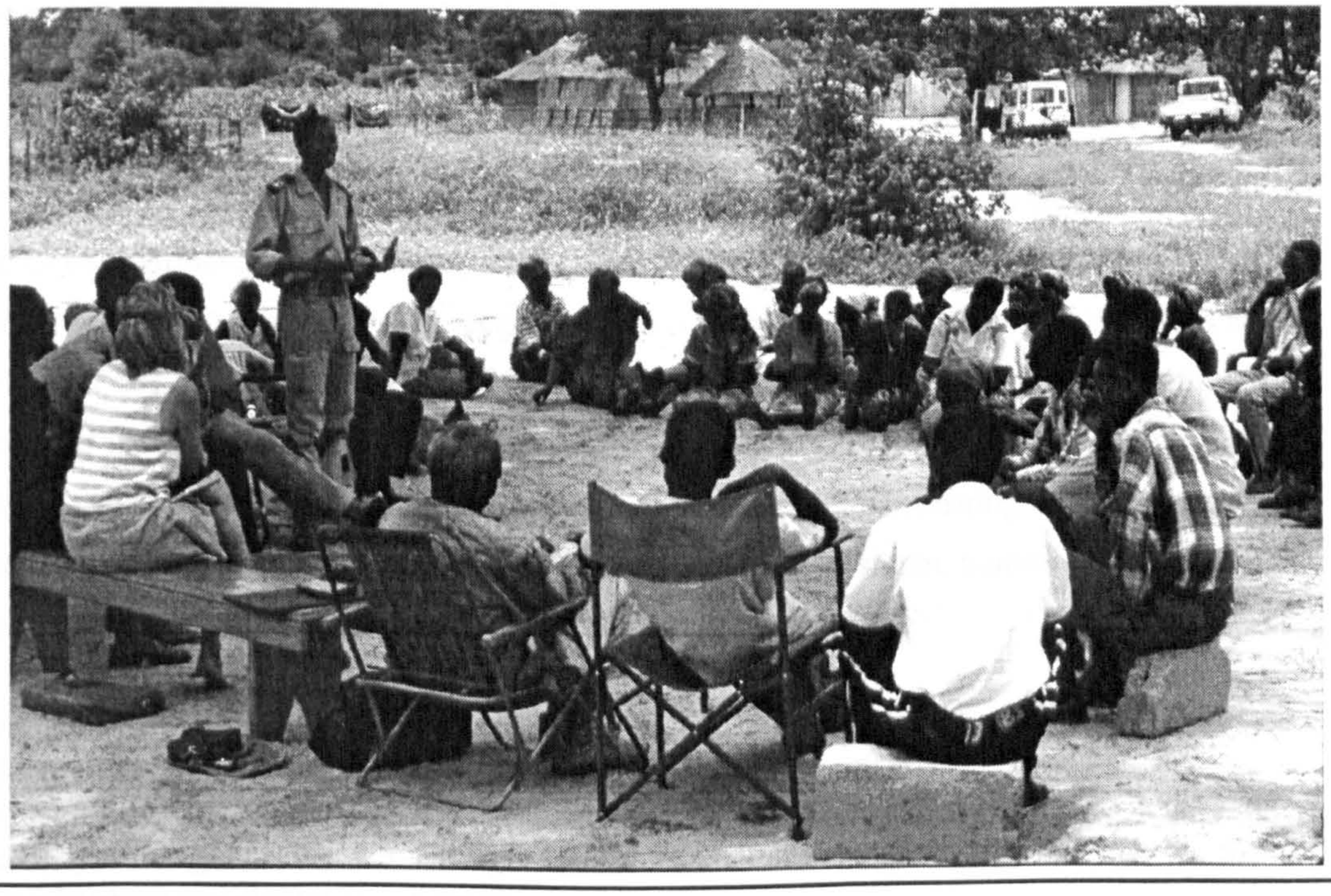


Plate 7.2: Meeting in Khwai with CBNRM's Technical Committee.

I was not present at the initial meetings in which Khwai and Mababe rebutted NRMP's early attempts to involve them in CBNRM, but in hindsight some residents say that they found NRMP's approach, of coming to their village for a short stay and offering to teach them to look after their natural resources, condescending. However, Khwai and Mababe did understand the potential of what CBNRM could offer, and internal discussions began on how it could best serve them. The programme aroused interest, because it spoke of central issues to their situation, not least of which was the management of land and resources that, until then, they had steadily been losing control over. Very soon, the land issue became the central point of negotiation. In 1995, a team of consultants, travelled to each of the proposed community CHAs in Ngamiland to prepare management plans for them. Residents of Khwai, Mababe and Gudigwa all raised the issue of alienation from land, and their view that their opinions were not respected because of their ethnicity. In Mababe, for example, the consultants were told, 'All over the country, Basarwa have never been treated as people' (OCC 1995:A7. See also 4,73,A10, and Bonduriansky n.d.15, HaBarad *et.al.* 1994:5). In fact, Mababe told the consultants that there would be no further discussions on this issue in their *kgotla* until they received a reply to a letter they had written to the Paramount Chief of Ngamiland in January 1994. The letter began: 'We the people of Mababe are waiting to be given back our land....', referring to the land lost to Chobe National Park and its extensions. The consultants noted in their report (OCC 1995:A16) that they had to stress to the people in Mababe that it was not a political meeting, as they raised many 'political' issues.

NRMPs response to Mababe was to dismiss involvement with Mababe, as they considered the village to be dominated by a minority in the village who, 'only represent a lobby group set up to work toward reversing a loss of access to land' (NRMP 1997:2). Statements of this nature indicate that those implementing CBNRM regarded the issue of land as a distraction from their central focus of assisting villages to set up Community Trusts and lease out their CHA. Yet, for Basarwa, the issue of land is undisputedly paramount. Returning to Mababe's 'hand-clapping meeting' about their constitution, Kebuelemang, the headman, commented at the end of the meeting:

> We are talking about irrelevant things here that have no purpose. Our food - *motsentsela* [Berchemia discolor] and *mmompudu* [Mimisops zeyheri] - is nearby yet we are hungry [a reference to N//odzõ, a fertile gathering area now encompassed by Chobe National Park], yet the government is sitting well-fed in Gaborone. All we say is taken by the wind because our stomachs are empty.

Political action to address political problems

The disenfranchisement of Basarwa, and their alienation from land and natural resources is deeply structural. This leads us to a central paradox of the official CBNRM programme in Botswana; CBNRM is assuming to address problems that are pre-eminently political and structural, but defining them as simply technical and geographical. The government is therefore a part of the problem rather than a neutral instrument for its solution (cf. Ferguson 1990:69), which makes the assumption that bureaucrats who implement CBNRM will be faithful in nurturing any meaningful form of 'empowerment' questionable. The issue of empowerment is especially pertinent for a category of people who have become dependent on the government for so many key aspects of their lives, particularly household reproduction (cf. Hitchcock and Holm 1993).

Nonetheless, Basarwa are not blind to the fact that to achieve their aims in CBNRM will require political action, rather than a passive acceptance of the official parameters it attempts to impose. This has been most pronounced for Khwai, whose hold on their land has been made all the more precarious by government threats to relocate them through the 1990s. When the management plan for Khwai revealed that they were to be offered NG18, but not NG19, the area in which their village (along with three lodges) is situated (Map 3.2), they realised that they would have little security of tenure, but felt powerless to challenge the government. In 1995, with the help of a lecturer from the University of Botswana, Dr Emang, and funding from an NGO, they sent a delegation to Gaborone to meet with Minister Mokgothu, the Minister of Local Government and Lands and successfully petitioned him for NG19 to be allocated to Khwai as well. I reproduce Moses' description of these events at length, as it not only relates how they achieved this, but also illuminates many of the principles touched upon in this chapter, not least how access to political authority is understood and approached:

> The government cannot be taken on by someone like a Mosarwa, because a Mosarwa is someone who is looked down upon. Even today if I speak out, people will ask themselves, 'Who is that?' When they hear I am a Mosarwa, they will say, 'That is someone with no sense'. That shows we have no strength. In the beginning the land belonged to Basarwa. They are the ones that were placed on the land with wild animals. Now the government is showing that it is in charge. They are in front, and Basarwa are now behind. The animals now belong to the government, the trees, and all the land. These things burden us. Now the government sells animals because they make a lot of money. The money is for the government, to buy cars, to pay soldiers. Batswana are eating, but we are not. The government has robbed us of our cows [i.e. wildlife]. They sell their own cows and ours too, and we are left sitting with our arms folded.

When tourism started increasing, Michael Tshipinare [then MP for the area] came and told us, 'You people in Khwai, this area is gazetted as a park, so it cannot have any developments. The things that you want like schools and clinics cannot be done in Khwai. With the government's new tourism policy, this area must be for wild animals only. You can tell me where you want to move to, be it Sankuyu, Mababe, or wherever. Only then you can get these developments'. He came in 1991. We told him we did not agree with his idea that we should go somewhere else for development: 'That means we are being moved. We have been moved often in our lives. Every Motswana has been developed in the area he originates from. If you are telling us to move to get development, we don't know life in those areas. We are not moving. If you want to take us somewhere else, you will be forcibly removing us and throwing us away. We are here because we have been moved here, and our houses were burnt where we came from. If we move from here, it will be the government that moves us, because it is used to doing so. We will stay here until that happens'. That is what we told him in the *kgotla*.

Sometime after Tshipinare's visit, there was a meeting organised by Dr Emang in Maun, just for Basarwa. Dr Emang tried to make us aware of our rights. I was chosen by the people of Khwai to go there, although we didn't know what the meeting was for. They were tired of going to so many meetings, and I was not someone who usually went to such meetings. It was my first meeting. When I got there, I found that Dr Emang had got all the government officials there; Land Board, the Chief, Police, the District Commissioner, Council, DWNP. He encouraged us to stand up and explain to what extent the government worked with us. We pointed at the officials there, explaining how each one worked with us. I realised that this was a very important, showing that Basarwa were able to express all their grievances about the groups that live next to them, or about government officials, or about animals, telling them that wild animals have been taken away from us, rights given to me by God. We were not afraid of anything. We asked a lot of questions and said a lot of things to the officials. We told them we had been arrested and tried for killing animals, but not in the same manner as other Batswana. This was because we are Basarwa and were oppressed, not knowing how to speak for ourselves. When they arrest a Mosarwa, they should know they are taking him from his property, that has been taken away by the government. They should recognise that these are the livelihood of Basarwa. One Mosarwa from Pandamatenga stood up and told of how one of his parents was apprehended by anti-poaching officials and beaten up so badly that he died in front of his children's eyes.

When I came back from this meeting, I told the people of Khwai about it, and I said if they would like, we should call Dr Emang, so that they could see him in Khwai... . He was someone who could help us meet the law-makers in Gaborone to prevent our village from being moved again... to meet the big people, the ones that plan development. We realised that if we did not act fast, what Tshipinare spoke of would happen, and we would be told to go and live in NG18 because the lodges already had NG19. We discussed and realised these things, and decided to call Dr Emang to sort this out for us, that we should go to where things are done, to take our grievance. We saw that if we did not speak out, we would end up being chased off our land. Dr Emang booked a hotel for us and sent a car to pick us up. We went [to Gaborone] and met with Minister Mokgothu.

When we arrived there, we didn't have a lot to say: 'We have come to you Minister, without a lot of things to say. Just that we have a complaint at Khwai. It is that our land that has been cut up, and they way this has been done shows that the land our village is on now belongs to lodges'. We asked whether we would be moved to NG18, and they

said it is only for business. We then asked him, 'If the lodges ended up winning [the tender for] NG19, where would our village go? We could not get an answer from Land Board, so have come to you to find out, the one who does these things, to explain to us where our village is going'. Mokgothu told us he did not know the details, he did not even know about Khwai, but he thanked us for coming to him to him. That is the highest office you can go to with a request or a complaint, after that it is only the president. He confirmed that NG19 would be tendered, and said we should apply for NG19 along with the lodges. The minister then said he would pass on our complaint about NG19, that our village is in NG19, yet it is being given to lodges. He said he would write them down for the president, who would then give us an answer. We then returned to Khwai.

If Dr Emang had not come to Khwai, our village would have been destroyed a long time ago, because the government came with a plan that we would not have been able to counter. All we could do was to go to Maun, but we had no means of going beyond to Gaborone and meeting with ministers like Mokgothu. We recognised this, that if Dr Emang was with us, he could open the door to where all these things are done. I have never heard of other Basarwa that took their grievances to the minister before this. They don't know how to go about it - how you get in, how you speak, how you start, what you come with. There are a lot of Basarwa who are oppressed, but they do not know who they can speak to. Other Basarwa have been moved because they don't have anyone to speak for them, although at Xade they had [John] Hardbattle.[73] If it wasn't for Dr Emang we certainly would have been moved... . We stood up about the move because we have been pushed around more than anyone else.

Although Moses' story is perhaps coloured by his stormy relationship with both fellow villagers and Dr Emang, it clearly illustrates the importance Khwai has placed on securing access to land, and the difficulties they have faced in achieving it. Moses attributes their success to crucial assistance by a concerned outsider in undertaking *political* action, a form of assistance not offered by NRMP. The full impact of Dr Emang's involvement with Khwai is complex. Apart from his undisputed role in assisting Khwai gain the promise of the lease for NG19, his erratic assistance may have delayed Khwai's registration of their Community Trust, and his outspokenness on issues pertaining to Basarwa may have strengthened Khwai's suspicions of involving a commercial operator in their area. Nonetheless, the point remains that Khwai initially chose to use his assistance rather than that offered by NRMP, as they realised that what the formal CBNRM programme offered them was meaningless if they could not get security of tenure to the land on which they lived.

The crucial issue of control

Having succeeded in securing the promise of NG19, Khwai proceeded to plan what to do with their CHA. The discussions and struggles that have occurred within and outside Khwai on what form these plans should take again illuminate priorities beyond the simple and neat

[73] A key founder member of First People of the Kalahari. His sudden death in 1996 was a setback for the organisation and causes it championed.

parameters of CBNRM's model of 'joint venture partnership'. For many residents of Khwai, *a sense of control* over the land and resources encompassed by their CHA is crucial. There are two significant reasons for this: firstly, as a reaction against the progressive dispossession they have experienced (Chapter Three); and secondly the different values, meanings and uses that Khwai's residents have placed on wildlife and natural resources (Chapters Five and Six). Both of these factors are largely a function of their ethnicity as Basarwa, and thus hinge on their *difference* from dominant society, making their identity central to negotiations over plans for their CHA.

The government's preferred plan of 'joint venture partnerships', as far as most residents are concerned, does not allow for adequate control to be retained. Many of the residents beyond middle-age wanted to use the annual quota purely for subsistence hunting, believing that selling their quota to a safari hunter, would compromise not only their subsistence options, but their sense of identity:

> Our culture is finished, finished by your *Sekgoa* [white people's culture], by the government. This was done by government wanting [money from] animals to pay it's workers. My heart tells me, when I see an animal, that a long time ago I could have eaten it, but it is held back by *molao* [law]. *Kereedilwe, Mababe.*

> Hunting in our concession area should be for Basarwa. We want to teach our children as we ourselves were taught by our parents. And they too will teach their children about the same things. If we take all these things and give them to white people, we will be left as Batswana, and our *Bosarwa* ['Bushmanness'] will be finished. *Moses, Khwai.*

While there is local agreement that the symbolic value of land and wildlife is incomparable to their cash value, their commercial value is nonetheless important. Mma Lebonang was one of the driving forces behind Khwai's attempts to set up the own Community Trust with the aim of eventually running their own safari. She questioned the utility of hunting purely for subsistence in a village meeting about the Community Trust:

> We went to Dice [the head of the Village Development Committee], as he used to hunt with the [Batawana] chiefs. I asked Dice if he any money to show from the elephants he hunted. 'Nothing', he told me. So, I asked him, 'Then what is the purpose of going back to the old system of Special Game Licences [i.e. subsistence hunting]?'

'We have nothing to show from our Special Game Licenses other than our stomachs' Mma Lebonang was fond of saying in the sometimes vociferous debates that took place in various fora, from village meetings to sessions in people's yard around a drum of *khadi* homebrew. Most residents of Khwai, however, agreed upon a compromise that combines patterns of

resource use familiar from their own past with commercial activities that will bring in the money so necessary for 'life'. The high value trophy animals would be sold for commercial hunting, and the others hunted for subsistence. 'If we don't want safaris in this land, how will we buy soap?' one regular subsistence hunter pragmatically asked.

Rra Diatla articulated some of the contradictions they faced in options under CBNRM, and the overriding importance of retaining control:

> These animals are our cows. They should bring us money. Like cattle, you kill some every now and then. We want to kill these animals ourselves. The government wants us to sell the animals to whites, so that they can be in control. But if a white person comes and does business, we will remain destitute. I want to sell whites animals, but not for nothing, we must sell them for what they are worth. I am selling my culture, so must make sure they don't finish. The present system is dictated by white tourism operators, who want these areas to be used for their own benefit.
>
> The government wants us to enter into tourism. We know about animals, but we are not consulted in planning policy. The government says these animals belong to itself, so it is them who must make decisions. They do not ask us how we want to use these animals. We know about conservation. Batswana who do not know about tourism come and tell us how we must go about it. I and the animals are one. I know how to manage them.

The tension is evident in his narrative between the desire to retain the symbolic and subsistence value of wildlife, while at the same time capitalising on its income potential. Whatever choices they make, however, people in Khwai also believe that they are in an informed position to make such choices themselves. They do not want to be dictated to by the commercial interests of a tourism operator, or distant bureaucrats. As Rra Diatla went on to explain:

> Our government knows nothing about animals. They know their offices. When Wildlife [DWNP officials] came here for training, it was us that taught them. Why should government or people from America come to teach us tourism? What I don't like about government is that they make decisions, and enshrine them in law, about things they don't know and I don't. I want tourism, but using *my* knowledge. I don't want to be given someone else's *molao*, but to use my own.

The general consensus in Khwai is that the best way to achieve these disparate aims is to set up their own safari company, owned by the Community Trust, and hire professionals to fill posts that Khwai residents are unable to fill themselves. This would allow them to gain an income from their area, use their skills for reasonable reward, and retain control over their CHA and the activities in it. Twenty-year old KB, like his grandfather Kwere, who fulfilled the role of headman for the people of Khwai in the past, was looked to by many people in

Khwai as one able to articulate their needs and priorities to outsiders. He explained to me their version of what 'development' means in the context of CBNRM:

> We don't want to give someone else our land. We are not like other villages being given their own CHAs who have only seen tourists for the past couple of years. Khwai is different, because we have lived with lodges for so long. We haven't benefited from them, though, as they have a colonial attitude. Ditshipi [a village south of Moremi that was in the process of tendering out their CHA]'s vision ends with asking to be provided with a job. We have said since the early 1990s when CBNRM began that we will never hand over this land to someone else... . Joint ventures may work well in Ditshipi where people are not thinking for themselves. Is putting money in the bank, like Sankuyu [a village southeast of Khwai that was already tendering out their CHA to a tourism operator] is doing, empowerment? Is it worth giving up your rights for a few hundred Pula each? This area is popular because it is wild, and it has been marketed overseas for 30 years. They market wildlife, not people. When we market our area, we will say that there are people here, because we will market our culture... . We want to try. If we fail, we fail. But others cannot decide for us before we start that we are going to fail.

The option that Khwai has chosen to follow is ironically referred to in the DWNP booklet on joint ventures as 'not a true joint venture'. However, as KB points out, presenting the usual option of leasing to a commercial operator as a 'joint venture' is questionable. Although in this scenario the Community Trust retains the prerogative whether or not to renew the lease to the same operator, the short experience of neighbouring trusts[74] indicate that while they may change the operator to whom they lease, they undertake very little in the way of management themselves.

The importance of retaining control over the land on which they live is reflected in other spheres not directly related to CBNRM. I term this 'petty control', as these are forms of control exercised locally against outsiders that mirror, rather than challenge, official forms of exerting control. This is reflected in the exclusionism directed against residents of Khwai who were not part of the original family removed from Moremi Game Reserve (Chapter Six). Mma /Idam, for example, head of Khwai's only Moyei household, lost the land on which she was building her vending shop, when KIMC allocated it to the new community-owned curio shop. KIMC named the shop *Itekeng*, a Setswana word meaning 'do your best'/'be self-sufficient', after Mma Lebonang's explanation that, 'We have been sleeping, but now woken up, and will do business ourselves. Basarwa are in charge of this land, and there is no black person who is going to push us around'. I too felt this petty control tangibly as I began my fieldwork in Khwai, a year after my first visit to ask permission to undertake my doctoral

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[74] These include Gudigwa and the other villages under *Okavango Community Trust* with NG22 and NG23, Ditshipi and the other villages under *Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community Trust* with NG32 and Sankuyu's *Sankuyu Tshwaragano Management Trust* with NG34.

research in their village. Although they had agreed to my research, I was reminded upon my return by one of the KIMC members that I was there at their behest, and that I would be asked to leave if my research went against their interests. During my stay a linguist and a journalist were both denied permission to do research in the village by KIMC members, who questioned whether they had a research permit from the Office of the President. In a similar vein, Khwai insisted on being informed in writing of any meetings to be held in their village. This even included the Minister, whose impending visit was announced in one meeting by the District Council's Social Welfare Officer. 'He should write and inform us', Dice, the VDC Chairman replied, 'tell him not to come without writing'.

Official conservation policy, culminating in CBNRM, has progressively stripped from the residents of Khwai a sense of control over their area. I interpret these examples of 'petty control' locally as manifestations of a desire to retain a sense of control over their village. As a sense of control over the future of their village has so far been frustrated by CBNRM and its preceding policies, this is expressed locally, even using elements of official authority such as the need for research permits. Whether these forms of petty control will weaken or be strengthened when – and if – Khwai gets more comprehensive control over their land remains to be seen.

What are the implications of CBNRM?

At this stage, it remains too early to ascertain to what extent the explicit aims behind the CBNRM programme in the northern sandveld are being met (although I offer my thoughts on how likely they are to be met in the concluding chapter). Nonetheless, it is already apparent that the CBNRM programme in the northern sandveld has so far served the interests of the state above those of the residents of the northern sandveld. This chapter has established that, although not necessarily a product of specific intentions, CBNRM has functioned to extend state authority into these marginal areas. Its introduction has also affected local manifestations of authority, prompting a higher degree of exclusionism to be asserted against 'marginal' residents. In this final section, I examine two further ways in which CBNRM and related policies have reconfigured the relationships between local people and the state. The first of these is an implication of the strength carried by government policies and pronouncements, and reflects their power to reconfigure the aspirations of its beneficiaries to fit more closely with official agendas. The second works in the opposite direction, is an unintended consequence, and may be one of the most important consequences of CBNRM; the politicisation of issues pertaining to resource tenure, and resultant local political organisation to protect local interests.

Reconfiguring aspirations and minimising options

Although assertions of *difference* are sometimes exaggerated to counter the universalism of official programmes, CBNRM policies have also promoted a degree of *conformity* amongst Basarwa who regard conforming to its dictates as the only means to achieve success in it. For example, Merafe was one of the young and educated members of KIMC, who tirelessly worked to put KIMC's plans into action. However, he remained sceptical as to how plausible it is to build their future plans on such a different set of values. In a discussion with Rra Diatla, his father, from which Rra Diatla's sentiments on the overriding importance of retaining control over wildlife are quoted on p.256, Merafe countered:

> The government has said we must leave behind that lifestyle. Our grandparents didn't know things like guns, and hunted on foot with spears. They were nomadic. The government has told us to move to one place, but we refused because we said what livelihood would we have in one area without being able to move around? But there are changes now. Our parents killed as they wanted, then licences were introduced to limit numbers. There are many of us now in Botswana, and we have to share all the resources. It is not like before when they only belonged to Basarwa. We must therefore change with the times. They reduced the number of animals on the licence so they would not finish. The government is the one who regulates so that we don't kill everything, and that each Motswana gets the same treatment, and the same amount. That is why I don't see the new dispensation as oppressive. It gives people the opportunity to govern and get an income from our land. We must use our advantage as Basarwa to govern our CHA well, as we are familiar with the animals. We cannot hunt more than our quota anyway, as we will finish the animals. We will make money from animals, and buy livestock in Maun when we need it, especially as *motsetse* [feast for a newborn child] and funerals are often in Maun.
>
> *I don't want to get used to hunting, because it is likely that the government will stop all citizen hunting, so I will be desiring something I am then denied. I will then become a poacher.* That is why I want to sell all our animals. Some of us suffered under the system of Special Game Licences, as the government said we were only allowed to hunt with guns, not other methods, and many didn't have guns. I am not against the way we used to live long ago, but *molao* has made it impossible. It is true, we are not listened to, but we cannot return to the way things were. (emphasis mine)

Like in his father's quote, the tension is evident in Merafe's sentiments between values and practices concerning wildlife from his own heritage, and the limitations imposed by official policy. While his father emphasised the importance of his heritage of hunting and gathering, Merafe consciously attempted to avoid experiences of hunting, which he admired, but nonetheless saw as being given no future by government policies. The sentiment that, despite whatever priorities they may themselves have, a future based on wildlife has been made impossible, is not restricted to the younger generation. Shangu, a 65 year old woman from

Gudigwa, for example, told me the same: 'We have been refused animals. We want them but have given up, so we will accept cattle'.[75]

Herein lies one of the powers of official development programmes and associated government policies; that they can define what has a future, and what does not. While this is challenged to some extent, the hurdles that are placed along the way make capitulation an increasingly likely outcome. This became evident in Khwai, as the delays to registering their Community Trust dragged on. The reasons for the delay are complex, and include delays by Dr Emang, on whom they had become reliant for their constitution to be formally written, and internal divisions within Khwai itself. Nonetheless, the failure of the Technical Committee to recognise their aspirations as legitimate and to provide appropriate assistance aggravated these factors. The delays this caused prompted such frustration locally that some of the people in Khwai who had supported the plan to set up their own safari company began thinking that it would be an impossible task, and were resigned to following the government's CBNRM blueprint.

Political empowerment

An ironic outcome of a policy that has served to strengthen centralised bureaucratic power is that it has prompted the political empowerment of its subjects through political organisation to *oppose* the manner of current CBNRM implementation. This may be the most important and lasting implication of the early phases of the introduction of CBNRM in the northern sandveld. Both Khwai and Gudigwa set up their own committees, operating separately from the government-initiated Village Development Committees (VDCs), to lobby for CBNRM to be shaped more according to their own priorities. In both cases, this was the first time that residents of these villages had themselves formed bodies with which to represent their views to government representatives.

With the assistance of Dr Emang, Khwai elected the Khwai Interim Management Committee (KIMC). This was intended to be a temporary body that would represent Khwai's priorities in CBNRM, particularly land, until a constitution could be drawn up and a legal Community Trust could be formed. KIMC formed the delegation to Minister Mokgothu in 1995, and continued to be the body for negotiations with the Technical Committee and other government bodies as they moved towards forming their own Trust. Locally, KIMC was

[75] The irony is not lost that a programme aimed at promoting wildlife over cattle may, through its unwillingness to allow it recipients to use wildlife as they would like, contribute to promoting the expansion of the cattle industry, albeit in another area.

regarded as 'the committee for land', and its role seen as crucial in articulating the voice of the village to officialdom.

The residents of Gudigwa considered too that their priorities in CBNRM had not been taken into account by the government. Having been combined with four other non-Basarwa villages under the Okavango Community Trust (OCT), they alleged that they were not receiving their fair share of the benefits accrued to OCT from leasing out their land, such as jobs, meat, cash, and use of OCT vehicles. This was an especially bitter pill to swallow, as they considered that despite losing direct legitimate access to wildlife through Special Game Licenses, they had gained little from CBNRM. Their pastoral neighbours, meanwhile, had kept their cattle, and gained income from wildlife under CBNRM as well.[76] In order to motivate for their own CHA from which they could directly benefit, they elected a committee of their own accord that they named *Masarwa Community.* Mothowamanoong, a man in his fifties explained their frustration:

> We are constrained to just sit and wait for food handouts each month from government, that can stop at any time. We say we should be given help that is really meaningful. We can't hunt, we can't grow, we have no cattle. That is why we want 'Masarwa Community', so we can work. If you ask why we want to be separate from blacks, the answer is that they oppress us because we are Basarwa. [ex-President] Seretse [Khama] gave us papers to live by animals because they are ours. The government then decided we were doing wrong, so took the papers away, but they must replace it with the opportunity to work. We will keep part of it to feed ourselves in, and we will bring tourists to the rest. Because we are not educated, we cannot live by anything else. If we had a lot of money like others, we would buy NG12, but our hands are short.

Masarwa Community was charged by residents with the aim of helping Gudigwa secede from OCT, and be allocated their own CHA (the land on which Gudigwa is situated, as well as much of their ancestral land shown in Appendix Five is encompassed by CHAs as yet unallocated). The committee functioned as a forum for the expression of grievances to visiting government officials, and they also commissioned the free services of a sympathetic lawyer through whom they sent several letters to the Land Board and District Council requesting their own CHA.

By 1998, these two committees could only point to mixed success: Gudigwa was still under OCT with little promise of gaining their own area; and, although KIMC gained the promise of

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[76] The government's draft CBNRM Policy of June 1999 contains a clause to protect the interests of members who rely partly on foraging for subsistence: 'Before using the quota, the community must first satisfy the needs of community members who rely upon natural resources for subsistence' (GOB 1999:15). Nonetheless, what 'satisfy[ing] the[ir] needs' entails remains ambiguous.

NG19, they remained in deadlock with the Technical Committee over the registration of their constitution. Nonetheless, I suggest that their real success was in the very act of forming bodies among themselves through which to articulate with the government in a political manner. This was a precedent for Khwai and Gudigwa, initiated primarily by their desire to be involved in CBNRM according to their own priorities. While this did function for the first time to encourage organised political engagement with the government, it meant as well that much of their energy was focused on countering aspects of CBNRM that they deemed inappropriate, rather than constructively building a CBNRM project according to their own designs.

The narrowness of the official CBNRM agenda with its assumption of the universal rural dweller has resulted in precisely the opposite being asserted on the local level, where problems and their solutions are often codified in ethnic terms. Khwai and Gudigwa have attempted to counter the constraints of CBNRM by asserting their *difference* as Basarwa, as expressed in the epigraph by Moses: 'You cannot put a tie on a buffalo, or give an animal bread, and say that is development'. Such assertions legitimate different treatment under the programme: reflected in Gudigwa's argument that they do not receive their due rewards from CBNRM because as Basarwa they are discriminated against; and that as Basarwa, they have a greater right to benefit from wildlife than either their neighbouring pastoralists or the government. The main reason for Khwai's deadlock with the Technical Committee in registering their Trust was their insistence in retaining clauses they had included from their earliest meetings about their constitution, that theirs would be a Basarwa Trust. They saw this as a means of protecting their village from becoming dominated by outsiders, but the Technical Committee maintained it invalidated their constitution, as it was contrary to the constitution of Botswana which claims to make no ethnic distinctions.

Gudigwa's proposal to secede from OCT, which hinted at 'ethnic' differentiation, was, like Khwai's, rejected outright by the Technical Committee. In response to a letter from Masarwa Community's lawyer, the Technical Committee asserted: 'The whole Gudigwa issue hinges on tribal/ethnic differences, with Basarwa calling for a concession area strictly for Basarwa, which development [*sic*] should be discouraged at all costs'. Nonetheless, the government's purported policy of not acknowledging 'ethnic' difference – exemplified by their responses to these situations – has not stopped Basarwa from emphasising it in attempts to protect their interests in a programme they feel they have little control over.

Mababe's Community Trust was registered in 1999, and they put up their CHA and its quota for tender to a commercial operator. Their registration was delayed as well, largely by debates within Mababe about whether to use the quota for continued subsistence hunting, or tender it. The split between these options was generally between elders - both men and women - wanting the first, and the younger people wanting the second. Unlike Khwai, and with no assistance from third parties, they saw their options as either completely accepting or completely rejecting the official CBNRM blueprint. Unable to reconcile the desires of young and old, the young eventually won out. Being literate, they were the main negotiators with the Technical Committee and their priorities were the ones that were heard.[77] By the 2000 hunting season (April 2000), the Technical Committee allowed Khwai to sell their hunting quota, (which has an unusually high number of trophy animals), although they still refused to grant Khwai the headlease for NG18, thus preventing them from undertaking any of their own commercial activities on it. With the assistance of a previous employee of DWNP in Maun, they divided their quota into twelve hunting packages, and auctioned them off for a total of P1,300,000. They were thus able (so far) to stick to their principle of retaining control over their area (by not leasing out their CHA), but not, as yet, realise any of their many plans to implement their own tourism enterprises.

Conclusion

Basarwa in the northern sandveld face the difficult task of asserting a form of 'development' that in some ways is oxymoronic to official models of what 'development' should entail. Within a dominant paradigm that is strongly modernist, attempts by Basarwa to resist the capitalisation of resources, or retain practices such as subsistence hunting, are interpreted by officials as backward, reflected in the rebuke to Khwai by the Technical Committee member: 'Your problem is that you are obsessed by hunting'. Since markers associated with the past are so much part of the way Basarwa represent their identity, officials regard them as stubbornly attempting to give the past a future, rather than being truly 'progressive'. The result is a polarisation of 'development' options by officials, as expressed by the Anti-Poaching Unit officer quoted in Chapter Four: Basarwa either remain 'primitive'; or are enticed out by 'showing them another way of life is better and easier'. These debates of what 'development' should entail take place in a highly value-laden environment, and little freedom or encouragement is given for development receivers to escape from an 'either-or' model and creatively mould their *own* development strategies that draw freely from different

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[77] The role of development interventions aimed at Basarwa in accentuating local differences, particularly generational, is also commented upon by Garland (1999:1), with respect to Nyae Nyae Development Foundation in Eastern Bushmanland, Namibia.

options, but adhere to the primary principle of retaining a meaningful form of control over the resources that CBNRM assumes to grant them.

'Today life is hard. The government is telling us to live in a different way than that we are used to', Tumelo, a middle-aged man from Khwai exclaimed to me. The sense of alienation from determining their own choices and their own future make the opportunities afforded by CBNRM particularly salient for Basarwa. Khwai and Gudigwa, and to a lesser extent Mababe, have all struggled to use CBNRM to address issues of primary importance, most especially control over land. In this sense, CBNRM has been embraced by these villages, who have recognised the potential it promises of reversing the gradual erosion of control over, land and its productive resources that they have suffered. However, the promise of CBNRM has proved in practice so far to be largely hollow. The current CBNRM policy operates under the assumption that providing *access* to resources is sufficient, and underestimates the importance, considering the specific history of Basarwa in the northern sandveld, placed on the ability to *control* these resources.

The government's singular agenda in CBNRM, I argue, has served to extend the authority and control of the state into these areas, where it has hitherto been marginal. Rather than increasing the authority of rural dwellers on the periphery of national parks over natural resources, CBNRM is in practice extending the authority of the state so firmly established in the national parks themselves, to the people who live on their peripheries. Contesting the development priorities of the state has necessitated articulation with the ideologies and forms of power that underpin official development interventions. The process of this articulation has demonstrated the cultural productivity of development representations and interventions; that through the dynamics of 'development', new forms of social positioning have appeared, both between Basarwa and the government, and within the villages themselves. This has had some ironic consequences; by attempting to depoliticise the issues that it is addressing, CBNRM and related policies have prompted new forms of political organisation and action by Basarwa. Furthermore, attempting to impose a development blueprint with little cognisance of difference has led, in some respects, to a greater assertion of difference from dominant society by Basarwa. At the same time, the seemingly inflexible constraints imposed by the parameters of CBNRM have served to stifle and frustrate the initiative and considerable creative energy of some of the supposed beneficiaries of CBNRM. It is a severe indictment of a programme that claims to promote local-level empowerment in the management of natural resources, that it not only fails to promote any meaningful form of empowerment, but also actively frustrates local initiatives aimed at achieving empowerment. Nonetheless, CBNRM has opened up

debate on issues of land and resource tenure that are so central to the priorities of residents of the northern sandveld that they are unlikely to be easily silenced.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions

In a world increasingly characterised by stark inequalities, 'development' remains a potent force in local, national and international politics. Attempts to address such imbalances are set to be an integral part of the socio-political landscapes of many parts of the world, particularly those peripheral to centres of political and economic power. This thesis has been above all an exploration of the dynamics, meanings and implications of different local and national conceptions of what 'development' should entail in a remote part of northern Ngamiland. Not only is this region geographically remote, but its inhabitants, being primarily Basarwa, have been structurally peripheralised from mainstream social, political and economic processes. The 'remoteness' of Basarwa from centres of political power, in these many different senses, has attracted Western popular and academic interest, and is increasingly attracting interest in the form of development interventions. Their peripheral position also provides a useful commentary on the dynamics of development: 'It is from the margins', comments Tucker (1999:19), 'that the most incisive critique of development can be constructed'. The contexts of Basarwa in the northern sandveld provide, as it were, a lens that magnifies and makes more visible some of the contradictions generally inherent in processes of development.

Development is for, and about, people. Yet, Basarwa in the northern sandveld often feel invisible to policy planners and implementers. 'They don't know there are people here', I was frequently told, echoing a similar paradox described by Adams (1978:474) for peasant farmers of Jamaane in the Senegal River Valley:

> For development to take place, Jamaane must be destroyed… . As Amara would put it: "They don't know there are live people here. *Ils ne savent pas qu'il y a ici des gens vivants".*

Fundamentally, Basarwa in the northern sandveld face the challenge of making their presence felt as people in what is generally regarded as a wildlife area, where the needs of wildlife appear to take priority over their own. As Mosadiwaputhego, Mma Kanjiye's daughter, told me: 'They took our Special Game Licenses and gave them to lions. It is only them that eat now'. Furthermore, they also face the challenge of asserting their presence *as Basarwa* in a socio-political environment that does not recognise local norms and values, and has steadily delegitimised practices associated with their identity.

Throughout this thesis, I have attempted to demonstrate that narratives of identity and ethnicity have been a central logic in both legitimating and contesting domination and inequality. They have also been integral elements of contestations over development. Legitimating the forms that 'development' should take (or be prevented from taking) involves certain ways of defining and representing a world that contains not only development interventions, but also the people being 'developed' and the landscape in which these people live. These definitions provide an interpretive grid that not only allows purveyors of development to construct a system of knowledge about the people and regions at whom it is targeted, but, crucially, that also allows them to act upon and change these regions (Ferguson 1990:15). I have shown how dominant representations of Basarwa as lacking *molao* (literally 'law', but implying 'civilisation') have in the past justified their servitude, just as benevolent declarations that Basarwa lack the means to enjoy the fruits of the country serve to justify the assimilationist nature of contemporary development interventions. By similar means, the ways in which Basarwa speak of their own identities often serve to discursively undermine such dominant representations, and legitimise locally-defined values, priorities and practices.

Struggles over material resources are thus frequently semiotic struggles; attempts to attach specific values and meanings to resources or practices. For the residents of the northern sandveld, their material struggles have centred around control over natural resources, particularly land and wildlife. Not only has alienation from them been an acutely felt reality, but it also brings to the fore essential markers of an identity that separates Basarwa from a dominant agro-pastoralist society. Yet, expressions of identity serve not only instrumental purposes, they are often deeply felt expressions of dignity and personhood, and illuminate that development is as much about dignity as it is about economics. Debates of 'development' are

thus intimately implicated with debates of ethnicity and identity, and the place of Basarwa as a category of people in the contemporary socio-political landscape of Botswana.

In this concluding chapter, I look again at these two central threads - identity and development - and draw out some of the analytical and applied issues have been raised. Firstly, I examine how representations by Basarwa of their own lives challenge the way we as academics represent the category of people encapsulated by this label. Secondly, I comment upon how the ethnography in this thesis reflects upon recent trends in critical development theory, and lastly, I re-examine CBNRM, and the ways in which it could be used to meet the overlapping goals of the government, tourism, conservation, and Basarwa themselves.

Researching and representing Basarwa

This thesis constitutes one in a long line of academic literature produced on Basarwa, or 'Bushmen'.[78] Much of this body of ethnography has been produced to satiate the curiosities of observers drawn to people whose hunting and gathering heritage held out the promise of illuminating different ways of being. The revisionist challenge to traditionalist perspectives reduced the distance between 'us' and 'them', but revisionist arguments were, nonetheless, still framed in terms of what Basarwa could or could not tell us about a hunting and gathering way of life. Without questioning the academic validity and excellence of much of the large body of Basarwa ethnography, these works, and the debates they have inspired, have (as yet) proved of little relevance to the people about whom they are written. As the Kalahari continues to become more accessible to external interests, particularly cattle, tourism, and various government programmes, Basarwa find their futures implicated in the activities and policies of others more than ever before, and inequalities are increasingly conspicuous. These political, social and economic realities can no longer be excluded from our ethnographies: they are too immediate, and their repercussions for our informants too real, for us to ignore.

These are considerations that have both methodological and analytical consequences for the way we represent Basarwa. Methodologically, our research interests need to be shaped more by our informants, and aimed at addressing current issues that are not only salient to academia, but to our informants themselves. For a category of less than 100,000 people, who have been the subject of more research than any other similarly-sized category of people in Africa, the disjuncture between the volume of this research and the minimal impact it has had on ameliorating aspects of their situation is especially stark. Analytically, questions of power

[78] Indicated by an annotated bibliography compiled by Barnard (1992b) of works relevant to the Kalahari Debate, which alone numbered 535 works.

and inequality need to be placed at the centre of studies with Basarwa. I have attempted to demonstrate how the salience of the label 'Mosarwa' lies not as much in a certain set of cultural patterns, as in a means by which both domination and local struggles for resources, rights and dignity have been ciphered. 'Basarwa' is thus a unifying label because it implies a common structural position in the socio-political economy of Botswana. This moves our analysis, alongside wider moves in the discipline of anthropology, away from prior attempts to delineate who 'the Basarwa' (or 'the Bugakhwe', or 'the Ts'exa', etc.) are. Escaping the artificiality of bounded holism involves a focus on the dynamic nature of socio-political systems in which people continually affirm, rework and challenge the patterns by which they live their lives, and the meanings attached to these patterns. Basarwa have been more prone than most people to be classed as, to use Clifford's phrase, 'endangered authenticities' (1988), a view that is as disempowering as it is fallacious.

Most of the younger generation of Basarwa in the northern sandveld today speaks Setswana better than they do Bugakhwedam or Ts'exadam. Some are fluent in English, and, through their work with tourists, are able to exchange pleasantries in Italian, German or French. Most households have a second home in Maun, the district capital, where they are integrated into wider social networks. Radios are ubiquitous, and with them comes a familiarity with national and global events and processes. Most Basarwa hunt and gather at times, but for few is this a primary source of subsistence. A great variety of social and political currents and crosscurrents exist among those encapsulated by the label *Mosarwa*, a diversity that I have attempted to portray. Nonetheless, I have focused too on commonalities: a shared heritage of hunting and gathering; pervasive poverty; and the profoundly political nature of the shared label *Mosarwa*. Although what is implied by this label is continually being reaffirmed, challenged and altered, it remains important to those that carry it, and Basarwa today in the northern sandveld generally consider themselves no less *Basarwa* (or any of its equivalent labels) than their ancestors were.

Development: discourse and diversity

Much of this thesis has been dedicated to exploring the relationship between 'development' and various forms of power and inequality. I have examined its epistemology (contestations over what 'development' should mean), and its politics (as a form of social control). I have shown how certain aspects of contemporary development programmes in the northern sandveld have a genealogy that stretches back long before the era of 'development', to the domination that Basarwa in the northern sandveld experienced over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In my analysis, I have found useful the insights of critical development

theorists - a body of work that has done much to shape the academic study of development in the past decade.

One of the prime contributions of critical development theorists has been to uncover the ideological nature of development. They have brought attention to the means by which 'development' facilitates managing and controlling those at whom it is aimed, and how this role is disguised by discourses that portray development as an essential but natural process. These inherent contradictions in development, alongside half a century of its evident failure in addressing poverty and marginalisation, have led critical development theorists to seek grassroots alternatives to development. With labels like 'counter-modernist' (Manzo 1991), or 'people's counter-tendencies to modernity' (Arce and Long 1999:27), the most popular exemplars have been the 'New Social Movements' of Latin America (e.g. Alvarez and Escobar 1992, Friedman 1994, Munck 1999:207). Certain aspects of this body of theory are, however, challenged by this ethnography: (1) its stress on the *oppositional* nature of local responses to development; (2) its focus on a global monolithic discourse at the expense of *national* discourses of development; and (3) its avoidance of the discursive constructs of subaltern people.

Firstly, in their intellectual deconstruction of development, many critical development theorists appear to have overlooked the prevalence of *local* desires for development. A clear dichotomy between homogenous discourses of development and oppositional discourses of anti-development may be ideologically attractive. Nonetheless, this perspective bears little resemblance to the reality and complexity of the ways in which development is spoken about in the northern sandveld, where 'development' and its commodities are universally sought after. The grassroots organisations that have grown up within the context of CBNRM in the northern sandveld could thus not be described as 'counter modernist', and their energies are not aimed at resisting development, but at harnessing its opportunities for their own goals and priorities. Of course, what development should entail is deeply contested, but Basarwa do not regard themselves as being 'anti-development'. Local narratives of development allude to 'progress' and 'becoming modern', and are thus a complex compound of aspects of dominant definitions of development and priorities drawn from their own experiences. Although Basarwa resent interventions that perpetuate their powerlessness, 'development' with its many different meanings remains a common goal of local residents and bureaucrats alike. I add to the calls of critical development theorists for deeper attention to what local people are saying about development. Nonetheless, premature attempts to write an obituary of

development (e.g. Sachs 1992), alongside academic projects to 'transcend' development, risk decontextualising themselves from local perspectives on development.

Secondly, deconstructing an imagined 'development metadiscourse' is a relatively straightforward task. It is somewhat more difficult to unravel 'the cacophony of different views and positions' (Stirrat 2000:33) that actually make up dominant narratives behind development interventions. Critical analyses of development discourses have, almost without exception, treated development discourse as a global phenomenon; a new form of imperialism that enables action by the 'First World' upon the 'Third World'. Little cognisance has been given to the way global discourses articulate with national and local discourses in the implementation of development programmes by 'Third World' governments on sections of their own populations. By ignoring national political processes, and the plurality of discourses involved, therefore, such analyses of global metadiscourses end up being curiously apolitical and Eurocentric.

Thirdly, many critical development theorists are inconsistent in their willingness to deconstruct dominant discourses of development, without problematising the discursive constructs of subaltern populations themselves (cf. Lehmann 1997). Although this is a sensitive task because of its potential to undermine the legitimacy of oppositional movements for justice (cf. Lee 1992:36), doing so is a necessary step in maintaining academic credibility. Contributing to a discussion of subaltern discursive constructs also means recognising the significance of local people as primary stakeholders in development. An extensive reliance on narratives by Basarwa of how they see themselves and their situations has been a deliberate hermeneutic method in this thesis, with these narratives providing a basis for understanding local experiences, relationships and needs. However, although these narratives are of interest in themselves, I have attempted to account for them as *representations* that reflect and affect social reality, but which at times also contradict it.

Although critical development theory has provided a useful starting point to my analysis, I have attempted in this thesis to move beyond its homogenising tendencies to emphasise the fluidity and heterogeneity of various dominant and subaltern narratives of development and the power relations they invoke. Avoiding dualistic and homogenising characterisations of development in which a monolithic producer of discourse acts upon people who in turn may initiate 'oppositional movements to development' (Escobar 1995) can only be achieved by detailed attention to the complexities of specific development interventions. This study of development in the northern sandveld has been one such attempt.

Finally, if everything is reduced to discourse, it becomes difficult to move beyond critique and suggest productive avenues of transformation and possibility (Agrawal 1996:465, Fagan 1999:188). Just as I have attempted to root analyses of discursive constructs in the everyday lived realities of residents of the northern sandveld, so too must these realities be an anchor to discussions of the possibilities of change.

Reassessing Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

Representing a global shift in approaches to both development and conservation, CBNRM uses much of the rhetoric prevalent in more general development approaches: 'empowerment'; 'participation'; and creating an 'enabling environment' in which local people can more effectively manage resources for their own benefit. I have argued that, despite its rhetoric of decentralising management power, the CBNRM programme has served to *extend* the authority of the state over both people and natural resources in an area where it has hitherto been marginal. Rather than decentralise any meaningful form of control over natural resources to local residents, it has so far functioned primarily as an attempt to co-opt them into adopting official priorities for development and conservation.

In practice, officials implementing CBNRM in the northern sandveld have pursued a narrow agenda of encouraging target 'communities' to sublease their land and sell their annual wildlife offtake quota to commercial tourism operators. This can be a very lucrative option, but although this option decentralises monetary benefits, the extent to which it decentralises the power to make meaningful management decisions is limited. Attempts, like those of Khwai, to use CBNRM as an opportunity to set up their *own* tourism operations, which allow not only a diversity of options, but also a meaningful sense of control to be exercised over their area, are actively discouraged by those implementing CBNRM. I have suggested that decentralising management to any significant degree (as proposed by Khwai's initial plan) is militated against by two factors. Firstly, the threat it poses to vested interests, which in northern Ngamiland are primarily those of the lucrative tourism industry, and, secondly, the administrative difficulties that a multitude of different local initiatives propose. For government officers implementing CBNRM, whose success is judged on the number of Community Trusts that they can set up, a blueprint plan provides the easiest and most efficient means of putting a CBNRM programme into place. However, these very human factors work on a systemic level to facilitate the extension of bureaucratic power through the attempted regularisation and normalisation of the social reality of the northern sandveld.

CBNRM has thus so far operated, alongside other government programmes such as the Remote Area Development Programme, as a form of social control over the residents of the northern sandveld. However, just as the processes of governmentality demonstrate perhaps initially unintended dynamics, so does the dynamism of people subsumed by the expanding authority of the state. Local contestations over what CBNRM should entail have set into motion two contrasting dynamics. The strength of official policy, underpinned by a dominant set of values (both encapsulated by the Setswana term *molao*) has been successful in some ways in conforming local expectations and desires to official priorities, as reflected in the comment by Merafe, the young treasurer of KIMC: 'I don't want to get used to hunting, because it is likely that the government will stop all citizen hunting, so I will be desiring something I am then denied. I will then become a poacher. That is why I want to sell all our animals'. Yet, the CBNRM programme has also inadvertently encouraged local political organisation, prompting the opposite of Ferguson's *Anti-Politics Machine* (1990), which, he argued, served to depoliticise the realities it touched. As such, the way in which CBNRM has been introduced in the northern sandveld has unwittingly *heightened* the politicisation of issues relating to land and resource control.

Government officials have a range of motivations in implementing CBNRM. For some, it presents an opportunity to facilitate rural development. For others, it is a means to achieve more effective local-level conservation, and for yet others it redistributes what would otherwise be government funds to rural areas. Yet, to the residents of the northern sandveld, CBNRM is, with few exceptions, primarily an opportunity to assert land and resource rights. This prompts two questions about the role of CBNRM, which I go on to examine. Firstly, considering the broader policy context of which CBNRM is a part, what is the scope for residents of the northern sandveld to achieve greater land and resource rights? Secondly, are there areas of overlap between the disparate aims of stakeholders in CBNRM, and what would be necessary to allow CBNRM to satisfy these various aims?

Resource tenure rights

Resource tenure in the northern sandveld represents a profoundly political dilemma of competing claims among different social groups and interest bodies. International conservation concerns consider the landscape of northern Ngamiland as part of a global heritage in need of 'preservation'. Allied with them are tourism interests, which fuel Botswana's fastest growing industry, generating ever increasing revenues and providing hope for employment. Added to these may soon be the claims of large cattle owners wanting to make use of the extensive grazing areas not encapsulated by Wildlife Management Areas -

their access facilitated by the reduction of tsetse infestation, and current road improvement programmes. The struggle to legitimate and realise claims to natural resources is one in which certain groups lose out, and so far, throughout the Kalahari, Basarwa have consistently lost more than other stakeholders.

At the heart of these struggles are debates as to how 'ownership' of natural resources is constituted and legitimated; what constitutes legitimate land use, and what resources can be legitimately 'owned'. The national legal system recognises land ownership arising from pastoralist or agricultural use, but not hunting and gathering (which requires much more extensive areas). Small parcels of land can thus be allocated to individuals or groups for the first two purposes, but not the third. In the same way, cattle can be individually owned, but wildlife remains largely common property (with the exception of 'community quotas' attached to each Controlled Hunting Area [CHA]). 'Domestic animals and how many you have are the result of one's own hard work and sweat. Wildlife, on the other hand, is the natural resource of the whole nation', explained a Motswana contributor at the Okavango People's Conference in Maun in May 1997 (OPWT 1997:31). Basarwa therefore find an important aspect of their livelihoods declared communal property, yet the individual wealth afforded by cattle typically remains beyond their reach. As Moses, the often outspoken entrepreneur from Khwai, explained to me, 'They eat [i.e. get rich] in our area, but we do not eat in theirs'.

Customary resource rights in the northern sandveld, like in many parts of Africa, have operated by default. In other words, they have continued only to the extent that no other interests present have been sufficiently important to contest their validity. The patchwork of overlapping rights that developed with the immigration of Bantu-speakers to the riverine fringes of the northern sandveld from the eighteenth century weakened the strength of Basarwa land tenure. Nonetheless, the ambiguities inherent in this system functioned to allow continued access to natural resources by Basarwa. As noted by Behnke (1994:15, quoted in Rohde 1997:390) of resource rights in an African context: 'certain critical ambiguities as to who owns what and can go where provide a degree of fluidity which suits everyone's purpose'. However, both *de jure* and *de facto* systems of resource tenure around the Okavango Delta have undergone considerable transformation over the past generation. The ambiguities inherent in resource tenure are becoming increasingly restricted, as conservation and tourism interests have provoked the clear demarcation of rights of access to land, wildlife and other natural resources. Moreover, with the increased interest of outsiders in the land and resources of the northern sandveld, its original inhabitants are increasingly vulnerable to

having the remaining ambiguities in resource tenure exploited by those more powerful than themselves.

Despite its role in weakening Basarwa resource tenure, land use policy has indirectly operated to the advantage to residents, in that the designation of land around Khwai and Mababe as Wildlife Management Areas has, like the tsetse fly, prevented the influx of cattle-keepers. The only possibility for residents to retain the last vestiges of resource rights is to find a way for the formalisation of tenure rights to more solidly protect their own interests, rather than primarily those of other interest groups. This is a possibility made real by CBNRM. The form of tenure offered by CBNRM offers an unprecedented opportunity to formalise rights over a large tract of land on a communal level, providing the legislative and policy framework for Basarwa to assert control over tracts of land beyond plots individually allocated for pastoralism or agriculture. Under CBNRM, residents can also exercise exclusionary rights against non-residents, allowing them, if necessary, to regulate the influx of more powerful 'others' who may otherwise come to dominate local political affairs, as has been the case in many of the government-initiated settlements for Remote Area Dwellers. The opportunities afforded by CBNRM may, therefore, be decisive in struggles by Basarwa to achieve a form of land rights.

Conservation and development: decentralising power

The tragedy of CBNRM in the northern sandveld is that it has so far failed to engage with the practices, priorities, aspirations and values of its potential beneficiaries. Its real beneficiaries, in fact, may be international tourists and conservation concerns, rather than local residents. By defining its benefits in purely monetarist terms, CBNRM neglects the history of resource use in the northern sandveld, local values attached to natural resources, and the diversity of livelihood strategies that residents pursue. This tragedy is especially pronounced, in that the issues that CBNRM raises, particularly of resource tenure, have been of utmost importance to residents of the northern sandveld, augmenting its potential to be of direct local relevance. Residents who have organised themselves in ambitious attempts to use the potential offered by CBNRM to implement a meaningful form of local development have found their energy expended in countering official hurdles instead of in creatively building their own programmes.

Despite disparities in the various aims that the stakeholders of the northern sandveld - conservationists, tourism operators, government officials, and residents - have for its future, they also share common goals. Primary among these is their common interest in the continued health of its natural environment. Furthermore, most stakeholders (with the exception,

perhaps, of some tourism operators) consider the new CBNRM programme as providing an opportunity to further their aims. Nonetheless, I suggest that, even notwithstanding local priorities, the manner in which the CBNRM programme is presently implemented is unlikely to satisfy official goals of either conservation or development unless it takes seriously its own rhetoric of believing in the managerial capabilities of local residents.

CBNRM initiatives are currently based on the assumption that by improving financial benefits, attitudes towards wildlife will improve. Not only is this assumption unproven, as Boggs (1999:31) asserts from her own research in Ngamiland, but it is based on the erroneous - but common (cf. Parry 1989) - assumption that local attitudes to wildlife are negative. Acknowledging that local criticism is directed against regimes of wildlife *management* rather than wildlife itself directs the need for change to official policy and practice as much as to local residents. Above all, the implementers of CBNRM need to overcome their marked reluctance to grant residents any form of *control* over the resources that have been so central to their lives and subsistence options. Attempts, under the rubric of CBNRM, to co-opt and regulate local relationships to natural resources serve instead to *undermine* local management institutions and relationships of accountability with respect to resource use. By delegating longstanding resource practices, such as subsistence hunting, to the realm of the illegal, such practices are forced to remain hidden, and are thus inadvertently individualised. I have argued that progressively stricter legislation restricting wildlife use has not significantly reduced subsistence hunting. Individual subsistence hunting is set to continue, driven by both the immediate demands of hunger, as well as a moral sense that access to wildlife is an inalienable right. As CBNRM attempts to reform, rather than articulate with, local practices, experiences and needs, it is unlikely to promote the form of conservation that its initiators intend.

As a development programme, the current means of implementing CBNRM amounts to little more than a form of welfare, a means of redistributing government funds to rural areas. Rather than promoting a genuine form of empowerment and self-sufficiency for local residents, it is at risk of substituting one form of dependency with another. Tourism operators who win the tender to sublease Community-Controlled Hunting Areas and their wildlife offtake quotas from Community Trusts (which is renewable in the first, third and fifth years) find it against their immediate interests to encourage local means of self-sufficiency. It is instead to their advantage to make themselves indispensable to local livelihoods, so that they continue to win the tender each time it is up for renewal. Of course, whether such economic considerations take priority over ethical decisions depends on the individual operator. One of

the large hunting and photographic tourism operators shared with me his opinion of the residents of the northern sandveld: 'They are destitute, their hands are out saying, "Give us food! Give us food!"' On several occasions (prior to their tenders being granted), he had sent trucks laden with sacks of food to Khwai and Mababe for free distribution, which Khwai Interim Management Committee told him not to repeat in their village. Nonetheless, he was alleged to have continued making food and money available from his offices in Maun to individuals from Khwai and Mababe who wanted it.

The very lucrative potential profits for tourism operators from achieving a long-term lease promotes attempts to win the favour of not only whole villages, but in particular the villages' Trust Committees, which carry most weight in determining the granting or renewal of leases. One member of the Khwai Interim Management Committee, for example, told me that an operator had offered him the personal 'gift' of a new four-wheel drive truck if his company was granted Khwai's hunting quota. By creating a small local elite whose main role is to make decisions pertaining to very large sums of money, the present system therefore promotes *instability* in relationships within villages (which rarely reflect the label 'community' that the CBNRM programme gives them), and between local residents and outsiders. This is particularly pertinent considering the heritage Basarwa have of a relatively egalitarian social structure, and the local suspicion that is thus bred when individuals assume inordinately powerful positions in which they can make decisions with little transparency. The instability inherent in such local structures of authority undermines the long-term sustainability of the type of local projects that CBNRM currently puts in place.

The sustainability of a CBNRM programme that is overwhelmingly aimed at maximising economic gain is therefore questionable. The potential for income and employment are, of course, locally important, but alongside these desires exists a keenly-felt history of extensive natural resource use that has steadily been curtailed by official edicts on land and wildlife. Alongside cash and employment, a meaningful sense of control over local natural resources, and over the commercial activities based on these resources, is of paramount importance to most residents. Rather than being 'anti-economic', local priorities for resource control will probably be more sustainable in the long term. The model suggested by Khwai, for example, involves selling trophy animals to commercial hunters (who would bring their clients to a locally run lodge), but retaining some for subsistence hunting. Photographic safaris would be conducted on foot, and be oriented at sharing local knowledge as much as simply viewing wildlife. Such operations may not maximise economic gain, as not all animals would be sold to hunters, and photographic tourists would be mid-range, rather than the high-cost tourism

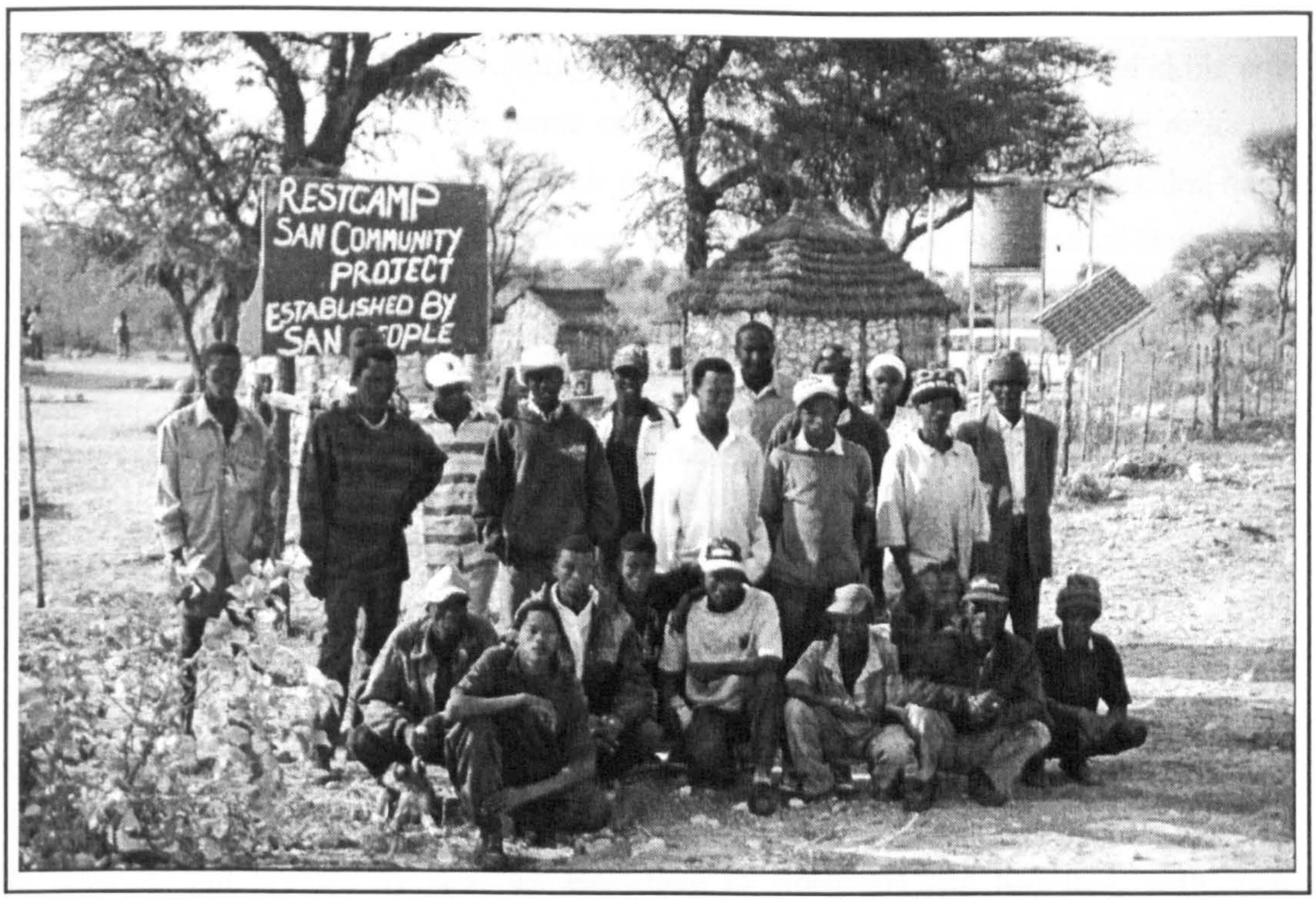

Plate 8.1: Delegates from the northern sandveld visit a restcamp in western Bushmanland, Namibia.

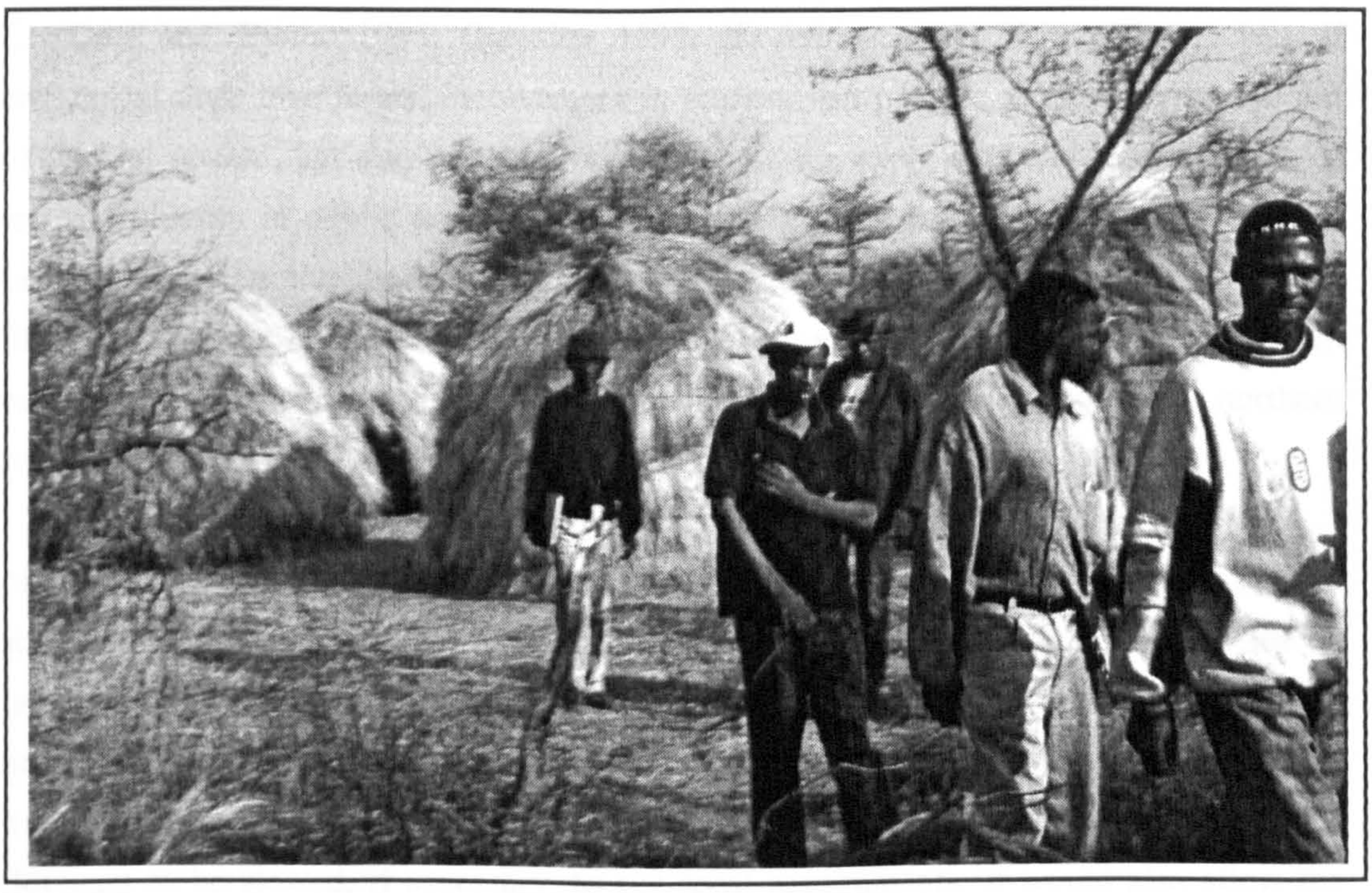

Plate 8.2: Visiting a tourism project by Basarwa at Dqae Qare farm, D'kar.

presently characteristic of such areas. Nonetheless, this form of tourism uses local skills and knowledge, and is undertaken on the terms of local residents, rather than making residents employees of someone else's project on their own land. The absurdity of relations that have been engendered under the current system were expressed by Patrick, the head of Gudigwa's Village Development Committee, who had recently resigned from his job as a tracker at the hunting lodge run by Okavango Community Trust's lessee:

> All professional hunters here are from South Africa, and they take clients around and tell them about animals. When we try and say something – us who were born here – they say, 'What do you know?' [But] I am of the sandveld. I am Khara/'uma.

The forms of 'ecotourism' that many residents of the northern sandveld favour are globally popular, having increased worldwide by thirty percent per annum through the 1990s (Honey 1999). Locally-run, small-scale tourism enterprises are increasingly seen as one of the most viable development options by Basarwa elsewhere in Botswana and Namibia, with such projects being set up with the assistance of NGOs in western Ngamiland, Ghanzi, and East and West Bushmanland in Namibia. The dangers of exploitative forms of tourism becoming a vehicle of disempowerment and dependence to Basarwa have already received extensive comment, as has its potential as a viable development option (e.g. Whyte 1995, Hitchcock 1997, ≠Oma and Thoma 1998, Guenther 1998, cf. Ashley et al. 2000). Nonetheless, if undertaken on their own terms, involvement in tourism can provide an opportunity for not only financial reward, but also increased visibility and the expression and reformulation of history and identity in public arenas. It can also provide one component of a diversity of options for pursuing livelihood options rather than the singular option pursued by the CBNRM programme. For these reasons, direct involvement in tourism is set to become an increasingly important element of development plans by Basarwa, particularly in the northern sandveld.

Despite the potential for locally based, small-scale tourism activities to promote a more holistic form of development, the current national policy framework (including policies on tourism, wildlife and CBNRM) continues to support high-cost (and thus high-expertise), low-volume tourism. Creating and supporting the opportunities for villages such as Khwai to set up their own tourism enterprises requires flexibility. This flexibility would allow the pace of development to be slowed, if necessary, to suit local requirements. It would also allow the freedom for different villages in the CBNRM programme to pursue projects within it that are most suited to local contexts and skills, and it would allow local livelihood priorities to be

reflected in the ways that tourism is developed. Moreover, the ability to mould their own diverse livelihood options would serve to avoid the limitations imposed by either overly culturalist or overly materialist interpretations of development, to which Basarwa have often been subject.[79]

The central challenge that the CBNRM programme faces is to bridge the ideological gap between its implementers and its intended beneficiaries. A lack of immediate co-operation from the residents of the northern sandveld is more a function of radically different ideologies and aims than a passive failure to realise the monetary benefits that CBNRM can bring. Yet, despite these differences, the various stakeholders in the northern sandveld share a common concern for the continued health and vitality of its natural environment, without which none of their aims would be attainable. I have suggested in this thesis that unless local residents - the primary stakeholders - are given a meaningful sense of control over natural resources and their own destiny, neither local priorities, nor official aims in development and conservation, are likely to be met.

The future

The northern peripheries of the Okavango Delta have seen considerable change over the past three decades. In 1967, the Okavango Delta's first lodge was built; Khwai River Lodge. By 1998, the Delta supported 54 hotels and lodges, part of a tourism industry that generates millions of Pula, and provides thousands of jobs. The land on which the residents of the northern sandveld have lived has become increasingly subject to the controls and agendas of outside interest, whether represented by conservationists, tourism operators, or government officials. The residents of the northern sandveld have also undergone significant demographic change, with increasing restrictions on access to land and the resources on it.

Although change is probably one of the most consistent and ubiquitous elements of the physical and social environment of the northern sandveld, the closing years of the twentieth century were especially marked as a time of transition for the residents of the northern sandveld. One of the most important elements of this transition is a tragedy beyond all proportion, common to much of the subcontinent. At the end of the 1990s, one in three adults in Botswana was estimated to be HIV positive, and, of all Botswana's districts, Ngamiland

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[79] Although development interventions involving Basarwa in Botswana are primarily materialist, extensive NGO involvement with several development initiatives involving Bushmen in Namibia and South Africa has promoted a heavily culturalist focus (Garland 1999, Robins 2000). The limitations of emphasising a unique 'Bushman' culture are no less real, considering the small role the primary stakeholders often play in defining what this 'culture' entails.

had the highest increase in the rate of infection. No specific figures were available for HIV infection rates in the northern sandveld, but they were probably slightly lower than the national average, due to its relative isolation. Nonetheless, like elsewhere in Botswana, deaths from AIDS were beginning to gather pace in the northern sandveld at the end of the 1990s, indicative of the catastrophic effects AIDS is set to have on its population over the coming years.

With the magnitude of the impending disaster from AIDS, other changes appear almost inconsequential. Nonetheless, in the face of ultimate powerlessness, residents of the northern sandveld will be forced to continue to look for 'life' in ways that that have been explored in this thesis. As I have outlined, the new CBNRM programme promises to play a key role in the directions that livelihood strategies in the northern sandveld take. Despite its evident failure thus far to engage with local agendas on land, resources and economics, there are tentative signs that some local priorities are being heard by policy makers. The draft CBNRM policy of June 1999 calls for 'Community-Use Zones' to be created in national parks and game reserves that give residents of adjacent areas rights of access (GOB 1999:27,32). It also suggests directing tourist traffic towards villages (1999:31), indicating recognition of the potential for direct local involvement in tourism. Yet, the draft policy favours too the continuation of the government's 'high-cost, low-volume' policy despite the demands of very high paying tourists often being beyond capabilities of small-scale, locally run tourism enterprises. Whether these are token changes, more comprehensive attempts to co-opt, regulate and control people such as those of the northern sandveld, or whether they mark the beginning of a more genuine engagement with local priorities, remains to be seen.

CBNRM offers the potential for viable economies to be created in areas that there have previously been few economic opportunities. If implemented beyond the narrow focus currently favoured by its practitioners, it can create a context in which a diversity of livelihood options (both economic and non-economic) are able to be sought without migration to the 'urban villages' of Ngamiland and beyond. The possibility of controlling their own local economies thus also opens the possibility of stronger social economies as well, which in turn facilitates the possibilities of united political action to address inequalities where these may exist. Whether or not CBNRM eventually does allow a diversified set of local livelihood options patterned on the aspirations of local residents is yet to be proven. Nonetheless, its enduring contribution to date has been to provide a forum for debate and mobilisation on issues of land, of rights to use natural resources, and of recognition. These are debates that are set to continue as

Basarwa in the northern sandveld attempt to mould 'development' to more suit their own hopes, aspirations and visions.

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VII Vorzeichen und Traum, Zauber und Magie

VIII Religion: Vorstellungen, Institutionen und Riten

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Glossary

//axa (B/T)	chief
Bakwena (S)	one of the principle Setswana-speaking tribes of Botswana
Bangwato (S)	another of the principle Setswana-speaking tribes of Botswana
Batawana (S)	the Setswana-speaking tribe that has been politically dominant in Ngamiland sinc the 19th century
basalagadi (S)	female Basarwa (derogatory)
Bosarwa (S)	'Bushmanness', or culture associated with Basarwa
botlhanka (S)	serfdom
dam (B/T)	tongue, or language
dao (B/T)	path/road/spoor
di xa //ae (B)	leader of a Basarwa village (lit: 'owner of village')
gondo (B/T)	a long flexible stick with a hook on the end used to catch springhares
kgamelo (S)	system used by Batswana polities to incorporate subject tribes (lit: 'milk jug)
kgosi (S)	chief
kgosana (S)	headman (lit: 'little chief')
kgotla (S)	originally meaning an assembly of elders, now most commonly refers to a geographical space in the centre of a village where the chief usually presides and public meetings are held
khadi (S)	homebrew made primarily with (Grewia bicolor) berries
Khara/'uma (B/T)	progenitor of all Basarwa, according to Khwe-speakers in the northern sandveld
khwe (B/T)	person
Lekgoa (S)	white person
Makoba (S)	Bayei (derogatory)
Masarwa (S)	Basarwa (derogatory)
masimo (S)	fields
matsenelela (S)	cattle that join the wrong herd
meraka (S)	cattleposts
Mma- (S)	prefix for teknonyms, meaning 'mother of - '
moagedi (S)	a person whose origins are from elsewhere, but lives in a place because they have built themselves a home there

mokoro (S)	dugout canoe, hollowed from the trunk of a single tree, and commonly associated with Bayei
molao (S)	law, but also implying civilisation
molao motheo (S)	constitution
molebeleedi (S)	overseer (of a district)
moloi (S)	witch/wizard (i.e. user of harmful supernatural powers)
Monate (S)	brand-name for a sorghum-based homebrew
morui (S)	an owner of livestock
motlhaba (S)	sand
motokwane (S)	cannabis
motse (S)	village
motswakwa (S)	foreigner
naga (S)	bush
namagadi (S)	female, usually used for animals
ndoba (Y)	bund, that Bayei often built across channels in the Okavango Delta to control the flow of floodwater
noka (S)	river
Omang (S)	name for national registration cards (lit: 'who are you?')
oo dao (B)	wide path through the bush, commonly made by elephants
oro (B/T)	waterhole
phapadi (S)	gathered food
Pula (S)	currency of Botswana (P7.00 = £1.00 in 1998)
rinderpest (E)	a malignant and contagious cattle disease, also affecting wild ungulates
Rra- (S)	prefix for teknonyms, meaning 'father of - '
rua (S)	to own or possess, but most commonly used with pastoral connotations, for example of animals, land or guns
Sekgoa (S)	language, culture or ways of white people
sehuba (S)	chest, also used to refer to tribute demanded by Batswana chiefs of their subjects
semausu (S)	vending stall
sesinyi (S)	law-breaker/mischievous person
sjambok (A)	a short, thick whip made from hippo or giraffe hide
tlhaloganyo (S)	mindset/understanding
tlhabolola (S)	develop/improve
tlholego (S)	heritage/essential nature/origins
ts'ao (B/T)	sandveld/bush

tsetse (S/E)	*Glossina morsitans*, small flies that transmit trypanosome parasites, causing sleeping sickness in people and nagana in livestock.
tswii (S)	edible roots of the water lily (Nymphaea nouchali var. caerulea)
thuso (S)	help/assistance
utswa (S)	poach/steal
veld (A)	open , thinly-forested grass country
Xukhwe (B/T)	Mosarwa

Languages:

S	Setswana
B	Bugakhwedam
T	Ts'exadam
Y	Shiyei
A	Afrikaans
E	English

APPENDICES

Appendix One

Names of Origin

Although the residents of Khwai and Gudigwa usually call themselves ***Bugakhwe,*** and of Mababe call themselves ***Ts'exa,*** they also have a number of other names by which they are known. I call these names of origin, as they often refer to demographic divisions that existed before the present patterns of living together. Others are simply nicknames, given to different family groups, but as these two uses are conflated (i.e. being a member of a different subgroup invites stereotyping and teasing), there is little to distinguish them. Kxoe in Caprivi refer to such names of social division as ***kurikx'am*** (***kuri*** – 'family', ***kx'am*** – 'mouth') (Gertrud Boden, pers.comm.), although I did not come across this word in Botswana.

Divisions of Bugakhwe

The main names of origin of Bugakhwe at Gudigwa are:

//Qarangu: (***//qara*** – 'dry', ***ngu*** – 'house'). This name apparently originted from the rough and unfinished grass mats from which they made their shelters. //Qarangu are considered to originate from Caprivi, although a many live in Gudigwa. They are generally looked down upon, and have a reputatuion for violence.

N≠'ujunu: (**n≠u** – 'food', ***junu*** – 'to finish'). Unsurprisingly, they are often teased for being greedy and finishing veld foods. Many N≠ujunu originate from the sandveld northeast of Gudigwa, in the land of Sangando and Amos (Appendix Four).

Thobokuru: (***thobo*** – 'wax', ***kuru*** – calabash container). Named after the wax that they (and others) use to fix cracked calabashes. Thobokuru consider themselves the senior people in Gudigwa.

Within these three main categories, various other divisions are sometimes referred to:

N/wãtau: (*n/wã* – 'bones', *tau* – 'grind'). A name that some N≠ujunu are distinguished as. Their name arises from allegations that they don't plan for the future, so when hunting is difficult, they are forced to return to site of old kills and eat the bones.

≠Xoakats'u: (*≠xoa* – 'elephant', *ts'u* – 'shit'). Another name given to some of the people otherwise known as N≠ujunu, to whom they are considered most closely related. With a name like this, few people admit to being *≠Xoakats'u*, and refer to themselves instead as being N≠ujunu.

Gwak'eikhwe: (*gwa* – 'Rhodesian teak, Baikiaea plurijuga', *k'ei* – 'lots of', *khwe* - 'people'). A term used to refer to people from the northern family lands, such as Patrick's, where this tree is more common.

These names tend to be fluid, and are not strictly adhered to. Moreover, as many of them have derogatory connotations, some people stress their alternative, more encompassing, identity of *Bugakhwe.* The longstanding residents of Khwai, in contrast, do not distinguish different names of origin among themselves. This is probably because all the core residents come from one of only two families that have close historical connections (these families are called *Madzikiza* by their relatives in Gudigwa, after the tall mophane stands that grow along the northern fringe of the Delta).

The names of origin of people in Mababe are of a different nature to those in Gudigwa. Rather than being primarily derogatory - implying they were given by their neighbours rather than being initially terms of self-appelation – names of origin in Mababe are generally associated with totems. Many residents of Gudigwa, too, have totems, but there is little correlation between totems and names of origin. Although all people in Mababe call themselves *Ts'exa*, there are distinct dialectical variations between people of different totemic groups. Names of origin in Mababe include:

Danisani: Danisani in Mababe, like Kebuelemang (the headman), originate from the southeast, near the Boteti River. Many Basarwa who live in those regions continue to call themselves Danisani. Their totem is a genet.

//xok'okhwe: (*//xo* – 'pig', *k'o* – 'eat', *khwe* – 'people'). Their totem is pig.

/Gin//akhwe: (***/gi*** – 'aardwolf', ***khwe*** – 'people'). Their totem is aardwolf.

Yookhwe: (***yoo*** – 'bush', ***khwe*** – 'people'). Their totem is crocodile.

Paterokhwe: (***patero*** – 'open plain', ***khwe*** – 'people'). Their totem is mokey.

Handaakhwe: (***handaa*** - 'plain', ***khwe*** – 'people'). Their totem is pig.

Appendix Two

Bugakhwe land taxonomy

This is a short list of the main categories in Bugakhwe land taxonomy, based on both substrate and vegetation type. It only includes land and vegetation types found in the northern sandveld of Ngamiland. The general word for 'bush' is ***ts'ao***, and any veld can be characterised by the dominant vegetation species as a prefix to ***–ts'ao***. For example, ***n/gaots'ao*** means veld dominated by ***n/gao*** (*mokwa,* Pterocarpus angolensis). ***K'ei*** means 'lots of', so such an area could equally be called ***n/gaok'ei***.

Name	**Description**	**Main uses**	**Illustration**
dom oro (lit: riverbed waterhole)	Fossil riverbeds: long open grass plains, with strings of waterholes.	Water, and associated plants and animals, like bullfrogs. Salt licks at waterholes, which are good locations for hunting.	
=hara	Deep sandveld, typically dominated by *mosheshe* (Burkea africana) *mokwa* (Pterocarpus angolensis), and *mokusi* (Baikiaea plurijuga)	Good for *Mokgomphatha* (Grewia flavescens) and edible grasses. Good for hunting roan, sable, eland, zebra, duiker and steenbok.	
/'ã	Open sandy areas dominated by *mogonono* (Terminalia sericia) and *mosheshe*. In some of these areas there are natural wells in the sand.	Good areas for trapping steenbok.	

Name	Description	Main uses	Illustration
//gorok'ei (lit: lots of mophane trees)	Dominated by mophane, and most commonly found on clay soils (***geri***).	Clay soils have good water retention, so good for waterholes and fields. *Mogwana* (Grewia bicolor) and different kinds of honey are abundant.	
geri (lit: clay)	Clay veld, (similar to above), often dominated by mophane (Colophosperm-um mopane), and *motswiri* (Combretum imberbe)	As above	
=eu	undulating/ uneven sand, dominated by *mogonono* (Terminalia sericia).	Not good for much, except springhares	
xoro	Open plain, with some spaced out mature trees	Good for visibility, and for hunting tsessebe, wildebeest, etc.	

Name	Description	Main uses	Illustration
ee	Open grass plain	Good for visibility when tracking and hunting, especially springhares. Often burnt at the end of winter.	
//xei//xeik'ei	Sandveld with small shrubs, especially *moselesele* (Dichrostachys cinerea). Quite bushy.	Good for *mogkomphatha*, (Grewia flavescens), steenbok, and edible birds	
//xom	Large, permanent river and swamp.	Water, hunting and fishing.	
/gwi	Bushy/thickly forested area. Used too for tree islands in the swamps.	Good for hiding in when hunting illegally, and finding animals such as buffalo, lions, etc. Wide variety of fruit.	

Appendix Three

Government handouts

To give an indication of welfare handouts in the northern sandveld, this appendix outlines the quantities of various forms of welfare that were given to residents of Khwai and Mababe. Unlike many other villages in Ngamiland (including Gudigwa) in 1998, Khwai and Mababe were receiving almost no CBPP welfare, as so few of their residents were considered to have been reliant on livestock. Except for the proportion of people classed as destitute, these figures are probably similar to villages throughout Botswana, Basarwa and non-Basarwa alike. What distinguishes Basarwa villages in this respect, is the relative importance that these forms of welfare play in household subistence strategies.

1. Rations for infants:

4 - 18 months	5kg *tsabana*[80] 750ml vegetable oil
19 - 36	7.5kg *tsabana* 750ml vegetable oil
3 - 6 years	5.5kg maizemeal 10kg *tsabana* 18kg beans 750ml vegetable oil
Pregnant women	5.5kg maizemeal 10kg *tsabana* 18kg beans 750ml vegetable oil
Lactating mothers	5.5kg maizemeal 10kg *tsabana* 18kg beans 750ml vegetable oil
In February 1998:	**32** children were receiving supplementary feed in **Mababe.** **49** children were receiving supplementary feed in **Khwai.**

[80] *Tsabana*, meaning 'for children' is a soya – milk powder mix.

2. Tuberculosis outpatients:

5.5kg maizemeal
10kg *tsabana*
18kg beans
750ml vegetable oil

In February 1998:

Two men in **Mababe** received TB rations.
No-one in **Khwai** received them.

3. Destitute rations:

maize meal 12.5kg
sorghum meal 10kg
flour 2.5kg
sugar 5kg
soap powder 150g
vaseline 50g
tea 125g
beans 500g
salt 500g
soup 2pkts
body soap 2bars
oil 750ml
baking powder 50g
milkpowder 250g
pilchards 215g
corned beef 190g

In February 1998:

Eight people in **Mababe** received destitute rations.
Eleven people in **Khwai** received destitute rations.

4. Pensions:

These were instituted in 1996, at P100 per month. They were increased to P120 in 1998 and P130 in 2000.

In January 1998:

Seven people in **Mababe** received a pension.
Eight peopler in **Khwai** received a pension.

5. CBPP:

50kg maizemeal
20kg sorghum meal
5l vegetable oil

CBPP rations were instituted in 1996 with the cattle slaughter, and had not been stopped by August 1998, even though the restocking exercise was complete. They were supplied in single, double or triple portions, depending on the size of the household. **Two** families in **Khwai** and **none** in **Mababe** received CBPP rations (though compare with 117 in Gudigwa).

Appendix Four

Yields of game meat

Tables A1 and A2 overleaf compare the potential yields of legally hunted game meat under the Special Game License (SGL) system, and the Community Quota system for Khwai. SGLs were allocated to almost all households in Khwai, Gudigwa and Mababe from 1979 (under the Unified Hunting Regulations) until 1995, when the introduction of CBNRM prompted their replaced with a Community Quota, with. When SGLs were rescinded in the northern sandveld in 1995, there were 27 households in Mababe and 32 in Khwai that had been granted an annual SGL (figures were unavailable for Gudigwa).

Using Khwai as an example, the figures show that under the SGL system, each license allowed 2420kg of meat to be legally obtained per year. Assuming a population of 360 people benefitting from 32 licenses, this allowed a per capita potential annual yield of 215kg (including buffaloes, which were removed from SPGs in 1991). Under the Community Quota, the vast majority of meat is from elephants, of which Khwai has a particularly generous quota (ten), but not all people eat elephant (usually because of church-associated taboos). For a population of 360 people, the Community Quota provides a potential annual per capita supply of 57kg of meat including elephants, and 7kg excluding elephants – much less than the potential 215kg that SGLs enabled.[81]

Part of the intention of CBNRM is to enable a cash income from wildlife, so that residents are able buy food to substitute a direct dependence on wildlife for subsistence. Apart from the size of the shortfall evident from these figures, this assumption ignores two other factors: that it is not always easy to buy food in places like Khwai; and that many Basarwa lay a specific

[81] Dressing weights are calculated at fifty percent of total body weight, except for elephants at thirty-five percent (taken from Skinner 1990). Up to eighty percent of an animal's body weight is consumed on individual hunting (as under SGLs), but if the animals are hunted communally, the organs are generally discarded, or eaten by the hunters.

claim to eating game meat (see quotes on p.209). Partly due to these factors, I argue that the Community Quota system will *not* curtail individual (and thus illegal) hunting.

Table A1: Potential annual yields of meat under the Special Game License system, Khwai

English name	Latin name	Dressing weight (kg)	Number per SGL (1995)	Total dressing weight (kg)
Buffalo	*Syncerus caffer*	370	2	740
Kudu	*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*	100	2	200
Red hartebeest	*Alcelaphus buselaphus*	60	4	240
Blue wilderbeest	*Connochaetes taurinus*	60	4	240
Tsessebe	*Damaliscus lunatus*	60	2	120
Red lechwe	*Kobus leche*	50	3	150
Warthog	*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*	35	3	105
Ostrich	*Struthio camelus australis*	30	2	60
Impala	*Aepyceros melampus*	25	4	100
Common duiker	*Sylvicapra grimmia*	9	30	270
Steenbok	*Raphicerus campestris*	5	30	150
Iguana	*Varanus nilotica*	3	5	15
Bat-eared fox	*Otocyon megalotis*	2	15	30
Jackal, hyena, baboon, monkey, wild dog		n/a		
TOTAL DRESSING WEIGHT PER SPECIAL GAME LICENSE				**2420**
PER CAPITA MEAT PROVISION				**215**

Table A2: Potential annual yields of meat under the Community Quota system, Khwai

English name	Latin name	Dressing weight (kg)	Number on 2000 quota	Total dressing weight (kg)
Elephant	*Loxodonta Africana*	1500	12	18000)
Buffalo	*Syncerus caffer*	370	2	740
Burchell's zebra	*Equus burchelli*	160	1	500
Sable	*Hippotragus niger*	110	1	110
Kudu	*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*	100	2	200
Tsessebe	*Damaliscus lunatus*	60	2	120
Red lechwe	*Kobus leche*	50	2	100
Warthog	*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*	35	3	105
Ostrich	*Struthio camelus australis*	30	2	60
Impala	*Aepyceros melampus*	25	4	100
Reedbuck	*Redunca arundinum*	23	3	69
Common duiker	*Sylvicapra grimmia*	9	30	270
Steenbok	*Raphicerus campestris*	5	30	150
Lion	*Panthera leo*	n/a	1	n/a
baboon	*Papio ursinus*	n/a	10	n/a
Spotted Hyena	*Crocuta crocuta*	n/a	10	n/a
Leopard	*Panthera pardus*	n/a	3	n/a
Nile crocodile	*Crocodylus niloticus*	n/a	1	n/a
TOTAL DRESSING WEIGHT (incl.) excl. elephants				**(20524) 2524**
PER CAPITA MEAT PROVISION *(incl.) excl. elephants*				**(57) 7**

Appendix Five

Gudigwa's family lands

The map produced from Gudigwa's land mapping exercise (this version showing the approximate boundaries of family lands) is contained in the pocket in the inside back cover.

Gudigwa:
Historic land use and place names

(showing family areas)

NAMIBIA
CAPRIVI - STRIP

Nyamanyama
Tqaraghwe
Patrick
Tanagu
Khwarako
Xaecego
Goo
Amos
Gudigwa
Rapula
Taetso
Motqa~gu
Two-Boy
Boikhutso

Track Follows International Boundary
Kuru Valley
Hakhawa Valley

Scale: 1:150,000

0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24

Kilometres

Legend

- Track
- Other track
- Airfield (as of 1989)
- International boundary
- Swamp
- Large pan
- Dry valley
- Lagoon (lediba)
- Exact location measured by GPS
- Approximate locations
- Hand-dug well
- Old village site
- Important food gathering/hunting area
- Settlement (1989)
- Old path route, Tshaobe to Dishokora

Note: Although locations are marked with a single dot, the names generally refer to an area (encompassing several waterholes and some surrounding sandveld) rather than a specific location.

Grid:	U.T.M. Zone 35
Projection:	Transverse Mercator
Spheroid:	Clarke 1880 (Modified)
Unit of measurement:	Metre
Meridian of measurement:	27 deg. E of Greenwich
Latitude of origin:	Equator
False co-ordinates of origin:	500,000mE 10,000,000mN

Based on LINYANTI, Sheet number 2, published by Department of Surveys and Lands, Gaborone, Botswana, 1989

These locations were mapped by Michael Taylor and Orakilwe Tsima, together with members of Gudigwa Village Development Committee, in July 1998. Financial assistance was provided by Conservation International and Okavango People's Wildlife Trust. The final map was made with the assistance of the Graphics Group, University of Edinburgh.